



Barnabas Fund's "Save Iraqi Christians" stand drew a lot of attention at exhibitions throughout the summer

At the time of writing 37,545 have signed our Save Iraqi Christians petition

In the light of this, it is potentially good news that the United States has significantly increased the number of Iraqi refugees allowed into the country, and, at the time of writing, they are aiming to reach the 12,000 goal set for September. Australia has increased its quota of places for asylum-seekers by 500 for the year 2008-9 and expects that most of these will be Iraqis. Please pray that the petition will prompt many Western governments to recognise the specific dangers facing Christian Iraqis and to welcome them in larger numbers, enabling them to settle and live out their faith in peace and freedom.

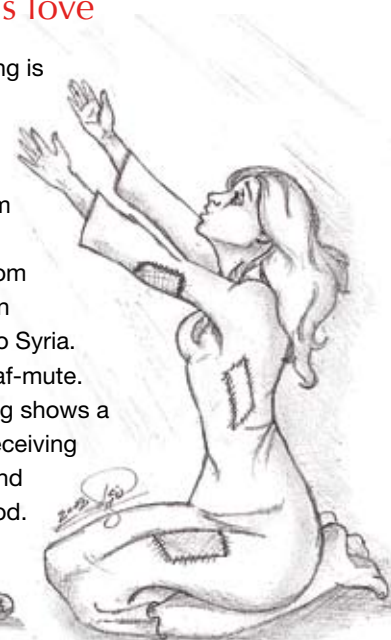
Barnabas Fund's exhibition stand: Raising awareness for the plight of Iraqi Christians

Over the summer, Barnabas Fund had a stand at several Christian events in the UK. A big banner with vivid images depicted the destruction that rages in Iraq, and it testified to the hardship and danger that Iraqi Christians have been facing over the last years. It generated a lot of interest and drew many people to come over and sign the petition.

A big "thank you" goes to all our supporters who visited our stand and took some time to chat and encourage us.

Expressing the wonder of God's love

This drawing is by an Iraqi Christian refugee, Nora Akram (aged 22). She fled from her home in Baghdad to Syria. Nora is deaf-mute. Her drawing shows a blind girl receiving her sight and praising God.



We would like to express our gratitude to all of you who have signed our "Save Iraqi Christians" campaign, collected signatures and written letters to raise awareness of the difficult and sometimes life-threatening situation of Iraqi Christians. It is only through your support that change can be brought about.

On 30 September 2008 the "Save Iraqi Christians" campaign officially came to an end but late additions can be accepted, **so if you still have signed petition sheets, please do send them in** to your nearest Barnabas Fund office (addresses on back cover). At the time of writing 37,545 signatures have been collected. The British signatures will be presented at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 5 November. Arrangements are in progress for presentation of the petition in Australia (to be followed by other countries).

The end of the campaign comes at a time when the situation in Iraq is beginning to stabilise but the situation of Iraqi Christians is still very precarious. On the one hand, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki claims that it is safe for Iraqi Christians to return to their home country. He has asked the European Union and especially Germany not to promote the emigration of Iraqi Christians to Europe. Following this demand,

German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, who had previously been one of the foremost supporters of granting preferred asylum to Iraqi Christians, performed a U-turn and has now withdrawn his appeal to the other EU member states to accept more Iraqi Christian refugees. Instead he is now encouraging Iraqi Christians to return to Iraq in order to help with the rebuilding of the country. The European Union is "observing" the situation in Iraq.

On the other hand, Iraqi Christians are still being targeted by militants, demanding huge sums of money. The improvements in security in certain parts of Iraq do not seem to have made life any safer for Iraqi Christians. "Nobody wants to go back, **nobody**," said a senior Iraqi church leader in the West when Barnabas Fund asked him whether Iraqi Christians were willing to return home.

Furthermore experts fear that the legal institutions and the necessary police presence required to guarantee freedom of religion for all are not yet effective. In addition, it is a matter for concern that the Iraqi Constitution specifies Islam as the official religion of Iraq and the "basic source of legislation". No law can be passed that conflicts with the "undisputed rules of Islam" or with the "principles of democracy", a combination that to some might sound like a contradiction.