

The slow, relentless disappearance of Christians in Iraq.


Owing to the pressure by fundamentalist Islamic groups, and to the precarious security situation, the tiny Christian minority is forced to depend almost entirely on its own resources.



Bishop Kassab of Basra, in the dispensary co-funded by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

But despite this, it is mostly the Christian religious communities which continue to work, tirelessly, in the hospitals and kindergartens, with the orphaned and the handicapped.

Thousands of Christian families have had no means of income for many months.

 Ever since 1957 Aid to Church in Need has been helping the poorest and most needy of the Christians in the Middle East, in a spirit of Christian charity and brotherhood.



The medical supplies and emergency basic necessities provided by ACN are little more than a drop in the ocean of need. What is most needed here at the moment is monetary assistance and human commitment to help the suffering population of the larger cities.



In the Institute of St Elias in Baghdad where students receive a basic education in philosophy and theology.

In Iraq there is no security.

“Criminal gangs are kidnapping young boys and girls in order to turn them into sex slaves, or drug dealers”, reports Archbishop Jan Sleiman of Baghdad.

In the south of the country the situation is especially catastrophic for the Christians. In Basra, for example, they are under increasing pressure. The Shiites are in the majority here, and they are striving for power.

Christian women have to veil themselves from head to foot before going out onto the street. Otherwise, they are attacked or threatened.

Despite their difficult situation, the Christians still engage in a lively community life. Bishop Kassab of Basra thanked Aid to the Church in Need for its support. He insists that the Christians are not at all hostile towards their Muslim neighbours.

Although most of the schools are open, only a handful of pupils and students

The world is talking about the daily violence in Iraq but they completely ignore the plight of the Christians.



Prayer for peace in Harmashe

 In the mainly Christian village of Harmashe, Aid to the Church in Need has funded a multipurpose centre, where Christians can celebrate Mass, pray together and meet as a living community.

dare venture out onto the streets. In the town of Dora, the scene of fierce fighting in 2003, the theological faculty - Babel College - was able to reopen its doors at the end of last year.

The Christians of Iraq are trying to leave the country. They are being forced to do so.

The challenges facing Aid to the Church in Need are immense:

- repair and rebuilding of churches.
- training of priests and religious.
- provision of emergency supplies.

All this is helping to stem the slow haemorrhage of Christian communities.



The family of a Christian grocer in Mosul, Iraq.

Let us not allow Christianity to die out in the countries of the Middle East!

