

June 12, 2020

His Excellency Dr. Fareed Yasseen
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
3421 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 22007

Dear Ambassador Yasseen,

We have the honor of writing to you regarding the official status of seven denominations of evangelical Christian churches which are members of the General Society for Iraqi National Evangelical Churches (GSINEC): Alliance Evangelical Church, New Life Church (Assembly of God), New Testament Baptist Church, Pentecostal Church, National Evangelical Baptist Church, Armenian Evangelical Church, and Nazarene Evangelical Church. Through the GSINEC these churches form part of the World Evangelical Alliance which brings together the 600 million evangelical Christians who are found in almost every country in the world.

These churches seek to be constructive members of Iraqi society, contributing to the advancement of your great country and the well-being of all its citizens. Yet, these churches currently lack the official recognition that would permit them to own property, enter into legally binding contracts, operate schools and charitable institutions, adequately care for the social and religious needs of their communities, and otherwise serve the common good in Iraq.

As Your Excellency knows, these groups, as Christian churches in good standing with their international counterparts, seek to be recognized under the Endowment of the Christians, Yezidi and Sabaeen-Mandaean Religions. Thus far their requests have been repeatedly denied. Respecting the religious freedom of these Iraqi religious communities and their members is a sovereign duty of the Iraqi national government both under its own constitution and its commitment to international human rights and religious freedom.

In its recent annual report on Iraq, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom called for "the empowerment of Iraqi religious and ethnic minorities—through their political and civic representatives as well as religious leaders—to initiate and advocate for their own interests..." (USCIRF Annual Report 2020, p. 72).

We would welcome an opportunity to dialogue with you further regarding this request. You may contact us via Galen Carey, Vice President for Government Relations, National Association of Evangelicals (gcarey@nae.net or +1 202 285 3835).

We extend our warmest greetings to you and your country during this difficult season.

Sincerely,



Galen Carey, National Association of Evangelicals

Brent McBurney, Advocates International

Oleksandra Matviichuk, Center for Civil Liberties

Wendy Wright, Christian Freedom International

Dr. Jeffrey Barrows, Christian Medical Dental Association

Susan Taylor, Church of Scientology National Affairs Office

Jianli Yang, Citizen Power Initiatives for China

Thierry Valle, Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience

Jazer Mauricio, Estamos Unidos/Pulse Latino America

Jonathan Imbody, Freedom2Care

John Boyd, Institute for Global Engagement

Ann Buwalda, Jubilee Campaign

Lauren Homer, Law and Liberty International

Rima Mall, Reach Out International

Scott Morgan, Red Eagle Enterprises

William Murray, Religious Freedom Coalition

Ibrahim Anli, Rumi Forum

Hulda Fahmi, Set My People Free

Metodija Koloski, United Macedonian Diaspora

Zeno Gamble, White Mountain Research

Thomas K. Johnson, World Evangelical Alliance