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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the situation of the Assyrian community and in prisons in Iraq

European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Assyrian community and in prisons in Iraq

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolution on the EU and Iraq - a framework for engagement adopted on 6 July 2005,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Iraq (Brussels, 27-28 February 2006),
 - having regard to the UN Convention against torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and its optional protocol,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, in Iraq, religious strife has been defined in recent months by the very visible escalation of violence between the Shiite and Sunni Arab population but less noticeably by mounting persecution of Christian, Sabran Mandeian and Yizidi religious minorities, along with the Shabaks and Turkomen,
- B. whereas the Christian communities, constituting the larger majority of these minority groups, are best known historically by Aramaic speaking Chaldo Assyrians and a smaller number of Armenians,
- C. whereas about a million of these minorities remain in Iraq with their numbers rapidly dwindling,
- D. whereas the Assyrian Community has been the victim of targeted violence such as property destruction, kidnapping, attacks on churches, harassment, extortion and torture of persons perceived as not respecting Islam,
- E. whereas the facts have been reported by the members of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) working in Iraq,
- F. concerned by the fact that the violations of the human rights of these religious minorities may be hidden within the report's descriptions of the larger situation of insecurity and terror in Iraq,
1. Is deeply concerned by evidence of abuses, torture and rape within some parts of the multinational forces-run prison system in Iraq as reported by Amnesty International in March 2006;

2. Calls on the Iraqi, US and UK authorities, who all operate detention facilities where persons detained by the multinational forces are held, to take urgent concrete steps to ensure that the fundamental rights of all detainees in Iraq are respected;
3. Condemns all acts of violence including attacks on religious minorities and the abuse of the rights of prisoners;
4. Underlines that these developments and the inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence highlight the powerful need for the formation of a government representing the different communities in Iraq which can unite the nation;
5. Expresses its full support for the efforts of the UN in promoting inter-communal dialogue and national dialogue;
6. Strongly supports calls by Iraqi political and religious leaders for restraint and urges Iraq to come together in a spirit of dialogue and mutual respect;
7. Welcomes the initiative by the League of Arab States to hold a second conference on national reconciliation with participation of all Iraqi communities;
8. Calls on the authorities to put in place adequate safeguards to protect detainees from torture and ill treatment by :
 - a) ensuring that all allegations of such abuse are subject to prompt, thorough and independent investigation and that any military, security or other officials found to have used, ordered or authorised torture are brought to justice,
 - b) ensuring that detainees are able effectively to challenge their detention before a court;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the governments of the Member States, the Council, the Commission, the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the governments of the countries included in the Barcelona process, the governments of Iran and of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Government and the Congress of the United States of America.