



ASIA/IRAQ – EU delegate: the government of Baghdad does not protect minorities. Let us give EU subsidies to the NGOs

Erbil (Agenzia Fides) - The European Union "must stop sending such financial aid to Baghdad, where it simply disappears, but must instead give it directly to the NGOs who are actively helping the Syrian refugees in Iraq." This is MEP Struan Stevenson's opinion, President of the European Parliament's delegation for Relations with Iraq. Stevenson released his statement after his recent trip in Iraqi Kurdistan. During the days spent in Iraq, Stevenson visited refugee camps in Syria and also held a conference in Erbil organized by the Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Christians, which over 600 people attended. The conference debated the gradual erosion of Iraq's ancient Christian community, which, according to data provided by Stevenson in the last 10 years, has dwindled from 1.5 million to an estimated 300 thousand. "One of the oldest Christian communities in the world" stresses Stevenson "now faces extinction because of virtual ethnic cleansing and constant vicious bombings, assassinations and kidnappings." According to the MEP, Iraqi Kurdistan is currently "the only safe haven for Christians and many other minorities who have found themselves under constant attack in Iraq," while the government led by Nuri al-Maliki is accused by Stevenson of "turning a blind-eye to the systematic discrimination and violence against ethnic minority groups," in the unleashing of sectarian conflict that is engulfing Iraq again. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 29/11/2013)