



## **ASIA/IRAQ - Syriac and Armenian recognized as official languages**

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) - The Iraqi Parliament has also recognized Syriac and Armenian among the official languages of the Country, along with the language spoken by the Turkmens. The Official Languages Act was passed by the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 7, and is the harvest of ten years efforts and mobilization and has finally been translated into the law as one of the basic rights, guaranteed by the Constitution. In fact, to date, the only official languages recognized were Arabic and Kurdish.

The law – refer local sources consulted by Fides Agency – was welcomed by the Christian communities. "The Syriac, is the language of Christ, the language of our ancestral, of Babylon and Assyria has returned to become an official language in Iraq" said Yonadam Kanna, Iraqi MP and Secretary General of the Assyrian Democratic Movement. The law will find practical applications especially in areas of high populated density of people in the areas of Nineveh Plain and the Governorates of Dahuk and Erbil.

In the dramatic moment experienced by the country, again wounded by sectarian clashes and attacked militarily by the jihadi militias, the law confirms the plurality of ethnic and cultural heritage in Iraq. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 10/01/2014)