



ASIA/IRAQ – Different opinions on the establishment of a province in the Nineveh Plain

Mosul (Agenzia Fides) - The Iraqi Council of Ministers approved a plan on Tuesday, January 21 that provides for the establishment of a new independent province in the Nineveh Plain, in the northern region of the Country that is a traditional area of settlement of the Iraqi Christian populations. The proposal to create a special administrative unit for the Nineveh Plain is strongly supported by representatives of Christian politicians, who see in this measure a tool to curb the decline of Christian communities - the Chaldean, the Syriac and Assyrian - traditionally rooted in the territory. If the project is brought to completion, the new administrative unit shall have jurisdiction over a population consisting of at least 40 per cent of Christians and will have its own budget, its own administrative tools and its security forces .

Robert DeKalaita, executive member of the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America, described the initiative of the Government of Iraq as "a dream come true", presenting it as "the first step towards a practical solution for the critical condition our people have experienced for ten years". While the local politician Dildar Zebari, a member and former vice-president of the provincial council of the administrative unit, said that the decision of the Iraqi government obeys pressures from abroad and does not take into account the real aspirations of local communities.

"The children of Nineveh" said Zebari to Iraqi sources consulted by Fides Agency "support the spirit of Iraqi citizenship that implies support for a shared commitment towards the institutions of the State, and not the desire to separate Nineveh from the rest of Iraq". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 23/01/2014)