

PRAYER LETTER

01 MARCH 20092ND IRAQI ARMY DIVISION MILITARY TRANSITION TEAM RELIGIOUS SUPPORT TEAMThis Week's High Value Prayer Focus: **ARAB-KURD TENSIONS**

Hundreds of towns marked “destroyed” dot maps of Iraq’s northern region as a testament to vicious ethnic violence between Arabs and Kurds. January’s provincial election results are shifting the balance of power in Mosul energizing racial strife and rekindling threats of violence.

Ask that God will inspire Kurds and Arabs to resolve their disputes peacefully. Ask that grievances may be forgiven. Ask that they may work together for mutual benefit and prosperity.

Prayer Requests and Reports:

SITUATION: What will happen to Iraq’s Christian ethnic minorities when the Americans leave? Chaldeans and Assyrians once ruled great empires from Babylon and Nineveh respectively. Their Christian institutions are among the oldest in the world. Their language is the world’s closest to the Aramaic that Jesus spoke. Their Syriac New Testament is the oldest of all New Testament translation traditions. Even after the 7th century Arab invasions, they maintained population majority and regional cultural dominance until the 13-14th century withdrawal of invading Mongols with whom they had sympathized against Arab rulers. In the ensuing backlash of persecution they became a minority. In the early 20th century they allied with the colonizing British then were halved in size and influence again in persecutions that followed the British withdrawal.

REQUEST: Intercede for the Chaldean and Assyrian Christian minorities in Iraq. Ask that they may reach out to their Arab and Kurd persecutors. Ask that when the Americans withdraw they will be spared from the brutality that was visited upon them when the British withdrew and when the Mongols withdrew.

REPORTS:

1. God has answered your prayers for rain. Conditions are miserable for battlefield circulations, but at least this year should see a good growing season, and that should help things stabilize.

2. This might be the last prayer letter from this 2-IA DIV MiTT Religious Support Team because it will be departing for America fairly soon.

Cultural and Devotional Observation on Relief and Force Protection

When Jesus calmed the storm, fed the hungry, and healed the sick, he gave to his followers, and eventually to Western civilization, the perspective that struggling against natural disasters, poverty, and sickness, is within God’s will. Before that time, general public opinion considered that disasters, poverty, and sickness were a judgment from God, so that struggling to overcome these would be resisting his will. Medical science, relief and development, natural disaster prediction and risk management have reached their zenith in civilizations influenced by Jesus, in which it is good and holy to struggle against abhorrent natural and social conditions. No one does international aid and disaster assistance better than America. No military does force protection, risk management, and medical evacuation better than America’s. For Americans, to struggle in these areas is consistent with a divine calling.