



## Assyria Council of Europe

1<sup>st</sup> November 2010  
Press Release

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### DUTCH MP SPEAKS OUT ON ASSYRIAN DEPORTATION BACK TO IRAQ.

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In the Dutch parliament today, the Christian Union (CU) MP Joel Voordewind spoke out about the ongoing deportations of Assyrian Christians back to Iraq. He expressed his desire to stop sending Christians back to Iraq, as there is a very strong case against the suitability of their return home amid waves of violence which show no signs of receding.

This comes as an aircraft with 15 Assyrian Christians was scheduled to return them permanently to Iraq last week, despite the [continued unrest](#) in the capital, Baghdad. Mr Voordewind requested the Minister for Immigration and Asylum, Geert Leers, to not send them back, especially since they are still clearly being [targeted](#) by Islamic militants as seen in the recent church massacre.



*Joel Voordewind, CU*

This resolution was not accepted by Pieter Omtzigt and his Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), who have the vote of thousands of Assyrians in the Netherlands. However, despite the nay vote cast by Mr Omtzigt, the Assyrians were not sent back due to a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, which requested the Dutch Government to not follow through with this action.



*Pieter Omtzigt, CDA*

In a meeting held after the voting process, delegates explored the possibility of a province for Assyrians Christians in the Nineveh Plains. The Assyria Council of Europe were present and pushed for this, explaining that a sustainable solution to the plight of the Assyrians must be created to first improve the quality of life in their homeland, and second, remedy the influx of asylum seekers.

66 churches have been attacked and bombed since the Iraq invasion and the European Union must take this security issue seriously.

If EU delegates and member states do not act to secure the future of Assyrians in Iraq, Assyrians will continue to leave Iraq and come to the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and other countries, exacerbating the refugee crisis. These states should either welcome them or help them in Iraq.

Open Doors, a Christian Aid organisation working in Dohuk, has said that there should be more aid for the Christians in Iraq, as they are especially targeted and need jobs and a secure future. Mr Hadad from the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) has cited “security and protection” as a priority which would enable everything else to follow.

Security in the form of a self-administrated province is essential so that Assyrians can grow and prosper. Kurds enjoy the security of a province and reap its benefits, so there is no reason why the more vulnerable Assyrians cannot either. Without the stability of a province and a local security force, Assyrian Christians are condemned to carry on living this nightmare they desire to wake from.