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04 July 2013

Persecution of Christians and the diminishing of Christian communities in the Muslim world, particularly in Syria

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Theodora BAKOYANNIS and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The rise to power of religiously inclined political forces following the so-called "Arab Spring", the advent of terrorism and religious fundamentalism, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and the unresolved Palestinian issue have created an unfavourable new scenery for Christians in the Middle East and beyond.

The situation is particularly grave in Syria. The civil war has led to the loss of tens of thousands of human lives, with Christians becoming the victims of persecution and atrocities from all sides, especially from those who claim liberty and civil rights as the main cause for their struggle.

In its Resolution (2012) 1878, the Parliamentary Assembly emphasizes that any new power in Syria must guarantee the same tolerance vis-à-vis Christians.

Developments there have, nevertheless, exceeded even the worst of fears: murders, internally displaced Christians, sexual assaults, destruction of churches, murders and kidnappings of priests.

An outrageous manifestation of the above was the kidnapping by Syrian armed militants of two Orthodox Bishops of Aleppo, Boulos Yaziji, head of the Greek Orthodox Church, and Yuhanna Ibrahim, head of the Syriac Orthodox Church, on 22 April 2013.

Considering that Syria is just the latest of developments leading to the diminishing of Christian communities in large parts of the Muslim world, it is high time for the Assembly to take action by:

- a compilation of all available data so that members get a clear picture of the situation and its tragic dimensions;
- a comprehensive proposal, to be introduced as policy recommendations, as a response to the gravity of the situation by all member States.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group

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