

OCTOBER 2014 : FOR PEACE IN IRAK

**To all of you who seek for peace:
Peace!**

Once again, Irak draws the attention of the international public opinion because of its political instability. I invite you to pray for peace in this millenary country, cradle of the civilisation, which is now in a dramatic situation.

The "Operation of Liberation of Irak" aimed mainly at stabilizing the country and bringing down its dictator, Saddam Hussein, with the armed intervention of the US and the coalition, on March 20th 2003. Eight years and nine months later, on December 21st 2011, the USA have left the country. This war caused the death of 250 thousand of Iraqis, 5 thousand of soldiers, and wounded 36 thousands of them. The absence of an expressive military power has given the opportunity for rebel Sunni groups to act, especially the Islamic State of Irak, who continues attacking the central government and the Chiite population. In 2012, a "Free Iraqi Army" was founded on the model of the Syrian army that was fighting the regime of Bachar el-Assad, in Syria. We already estimate that more than 15 thousand people are dead in the civil war, and more than 250 thousand have been forced to move because of the religious persecution, especially Christians and Yezidis.

Confronted with the innumerable and terrible violations of the Human Rights, we call on the United Nations to immediately deploy the military special units from the largest number countries possible, units that will have the necessary ability to stop the ethnical and sectary purification that is being enacted, and to make sure that the refugees can come back to their home safe and sound and to bring the responsible to justice. We also have to take measures to stop furnishing weapons to the responsible and to sanction those who continue to furnish them. An immediate reply will permit to solve the humanitarian crisis, before the situation becomes uncontrollable. It also implies measures of protection for the members of persecuted minority community and, according to the humanitarian international right, guarantee them an immediate asylum right. This range of initiatives will permit to immediately establish the conditions for a dialogue and negotiations for peace that would include all the components of society.

For a clear and courageous standpoint of the entire international community, let us pray the Lord:

Lord, our God, God of the living and not of the dead, look with compassion upon Irak, the country where was born the patriarch Abraham. May you accomplish for this people all your promises of peace! May the violations of the Human Rights cease! May we constitute a democratic and tolerant country, so that Christians, Muslims and believers of all faiths live together and build a culture of conviviality, and a civilisation that they might be proud of! May no religion justify the violences and all the religions work together in favor of human dignity! Amen.

Best regards,

Br. Irénée Rezende Guimarães

Benedictan monk of Notre Dame Abbey, Tournay, France.

Tournay, August 20th 2014.