



**Assyrian Aid Society - Iraq**

Human Rights Council 39<sup>th</sup> session  
Agenda item 10 | General Debate  
Oral Statement | Speaker: Wissam al-Saliby  
Date: 27 September 2018

The World Evangelical Alliance, together with the Assyrian Aid Society - Iraq, would like to bring to the attention of this esteemed council the situation of civilians in Northern Iraq and in the Iraqi border areas with Turkey, including the situation of Christian minorities in those areas.

The ongoing hostilities between the Turkish army and the PKK are a source of instability, affecting the livelihood of civilians and the enjoyment of human rights, and are hindering the return of the internally displaced, including Assyrian Christians, in Iraq.

This month alone saw dozens of attacks by Turkey against presumed PKK armed group members in Northern Iraq. In the regions of Kani Mase, Barwari Bala and Nahla Valley in the province of Dohuk, civilian property and agricultural land have been damaged.

We take note of this month's decision of the Iraqi government to deploy further border guards. And we call on the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure the safety of the population on the borders, to invest more efforts in building trust among communities, to facilitate return of IDPs including the Christian communities, and to ensure that the homes and businesses of those displaced are restored to them.

We call on both the government of Turkey and the PKK armed group to respect international humanitarian norms, and to ensure that civilians are not affected by their respective defensive or offensive military operations.