

Open Doors Calls on Clinton to Help Iraqi Christians

During early evening on Dec. 30, an elderly Christian couple—Fawzi Rahim, 76, and his wife Janet Mekha, 78—answered their doorbell at their Baghdad, Iraq, home. When they opened the door, a bomb placed on their steps exploded. Both were instantly killed.

Rahim's brother, Falah al-Tabbakh, told the Associated Press: "When I went there, I found both of them cut to pieces near the gate of their house."

During that night at least seven other Christian homes in Baghdad were targeted, resulting in at least 13 people being wounded. The carnage came a week after al-Qaeda-linked militants renewed their threats to attack Iraq's Christians.

The violence against Christians in Iraq has rapidly escalated in the past year, including a bomb attack on three buses carrying Christian students in May and the Oct. 31 siege at Our Lady of Salvation Cathedral in Baghdad in which 58 were killed. Then, a Christian doctor was shot and seriously wounded at a medical clinic in Mosul last Saturday.

As a result of the increase in violence against Christians, Iraq moved from No. 17 to No. 8 on this year's Open Doors World Watch List of the worst persecutors of Christians.

The number of Christians in Iraq has decreased from an estimated 850,000 in 1991 to 330,000 today. Thousands have fled Iraq and now reside as impoverished refugees in Syria and Jordan. Of the Christians that remain in Iraq, more than half are internally displaced due to violence and constant threats against them by Islamic extremists.

As Open Doors sees it, the Iraqi government has not made

protection of Christians a priority.

“The U.S. government needs to strongly encourage and work with the Iraqi government to protect Christians and other religious minorities before they are all driven out of Iraq,” says Open Doors USA President and CEO Dr. Carl Moeller. “History continues to demonstrate that where religious freedom flourishes, stable democracies, strong economies and healthy societies develop. Considering the immense financial commitment the United States has made in Iraq and the tragic loss of American and Iraqi lives, it is imperative that we hold both the United States and Iraqi governments accountable to ensure religious freedom for all people in Iraq.”

Open Doors USA is not only urging your prayers for embattled believers in Iraq, but it is also asking people to sign a petition to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The petition is asking her to work with the Iraqi government to immediately form and implement a comprehensive plan of action to protect the vulnerable community of Christians in Iraq.

To sign the petition, go to