

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 430 Session of
2014

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, STACK, WILLIAMS, ARGALL, SCARNATI,
FONTANA, SCHWANK, EICHELBERGER, MENSCH, SMITH, GORDNER,
VULAKOVICH, ERICKSON, WAGNER, McILHINNEY, WHITE, YUDICHAK,
KITCHEN AND ALLOWAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

REFERRED TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

A RESOLUTION

Urging the President and the Congress of the United States to
publicly denounce the crimes against humanity occurring in
Iraq and to take every step possible to protect Iraqi
Christians and other religious minorities from persecution
from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

WHEREAS, Iraq is currently embroiled in a surge of violence
arising from an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-led
offensive that began in the Anbar province, has spread to key
locations such as Mosul, Tikrit and Samarra and continues to
engulf the region in violence and instability; and

WHEREAS, On June 29, 2014, ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
renamed the group the Islamic State and pronounced himself
caliph of a new Islamic Caliphate encompassing the areas under
his control; and

WHEREAS, Mr. al-Baghdadi has a stated mission of spreading
the Islamic State and caliphate across the region through
violence against Shiites, non-Muslims and unsupportive Sunnis;
and

1 WHEREAS, Upon taking control over northwestern Iraq and
2 Syria, ISIL issued a warning to Christians living under its
3 jurisdiction to convert to Islam, to pay a burdensome religious
4 tax or to be executed; and

5 WHEREAS, Over 1,000,000 people have been displaced by
6 violence in Iraq and reports have surfaced of targeted
7 harassment, persecution and killings of Iraqi religious
8 minorities by the Islamic State with little to no protection
9 from the Government of Iraq and other security forces; and

10 WHEREAS, Reports indicate that Islamic State militants have
11 been marking homes of Christians with the Arabic letter "N," for
12 "Nazara" (Christian), beheading children and crucifying
13 captives. ISIL's actions are a crime against humanity and
14 nothing more than genocide or ethnic cleansing against religious
15 minority groups; and

16 WHEREAS, The Iraqi constitution provides for religious
17 freedom by stating:

18 (1) "no law may be enacted that contradicts the
19 principles of democracy";

20 (2) "no law may be enacted that contradicts the rights
21 and basic freedoms stipulated in this Constitution"; and

22 (3) "[This Constitution] guarantees the full religious
23 rights to freedom of religious belief and practice of all
24 individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans
25 Sabeans";

26 and

27 WHEREAS, President Barack Obama recently declared on
28 Religious Freedom Day, "Foremost among the rights Americans hold
29 sacred is the freedom to worship as we choose ... [W]e also
30 remember that religious liberty is not just an American right;

1 it is a universal human right to be protected here at home and
2 across the globe. This freedom is an essential part of human
3 dignity, and without it our world cannot know lasting peace";
4 and

5 WHEREAS, The atrocities being committed against Christians
6 and other ethnic and religious minority communities in Iraq are
7 unconscionable and represent a crime against humanity; therefore
8 be it

9 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
10 urge the President and the Congress of the United States to
11 publicly denounce the crimes against humanity occurring in Iraq
12 and to take every step possible to protect Iraqi Christians and
13 other religious minorities from persecution from the Islamic
14 State of Iraq and the Levant; and

15 RESOLVED, That the President and Congress urge the Government
16 of Iraq to take immediate steps to protect the safety and
17 constitutional rights of all Iraqi citizens; and

18 RESOLVED, That the President and Congress work with the
19 Government of Iraq to bring Islamic State militants to justice
20 before an international forum for war crimes and crimes against
21 humanity; be it further

22 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
23 the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of
24 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from
25 Pennsylvania.