



ICRD Monthly Update

August 27, 2013

Hope Amidst the Darkness in Syria



Last month, ICRD conducted back-to-back, faith-based reconciliation workshops in Midyat, Turkey for Kurdish, Syriac Christian, and Arab tribal leaders from the Al-Hassake region of Eastern Syria. The purpose of the first workshop was to **produce a social contract between the Kurds and the Syriac Christians** that will enable them to live in peace in the future, independent of the future of the

Assad regime. The purpose of the second workshop was to facilitate a problem-solving session on political power-sharing and regional security with the leaders of all three groups.

The *contract* is currently being finalized for distribution throughout the region, with the goal of implementing a working regional model that can serve as the basis for a comparable *national contract*. A tall order, but the initiative has been enthusiastically received by all three groups and is providing a ray of hope in a context where hope is in very short supply.



Syrian participants engaged in ICRD's faith-based reconciliation workshop.

As you will note, **we have expanded the scope of our Syrian involvement beyond the opposition elements to include Christian leaders as well.** As has been widely reported, Christian communities in the region have been suffering more than most in the midst of the political turmoil. In Iraq, for example, of the approximately one million Christians who lived there before the war, more than 400,000 have fled the country; and many of those who remained behind are internally displaced. In other words, more than 40% of Iraq's refugees



come from a community that represented less than 4% of the total population. In Egypt, Coptic Christians have been bearing the brunt of much of the violence surrounding President Mohamed Morsi's removal. This kind of treatment could easily be repeated in Syria (as it has been elsewhere). For somewhat related reasons, the next seminar, which is scheduled for October, will include Alawites as well.

With Best Wishes,

Doug Johnston
President, ICRD

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CFC Code: 12440

"Several of the top political leaders from the region were interviewed on camera by the media and spoke about how a new direction and vision has come to the region that is bringing unity to the three communities."

~ Brian Cox
ICRD Sr. Vice President

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