



# ONE MILLION VOICES OF HOPE COUNT ME IN!

"Save us, Lord our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise."

Psalm 106:47

## WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR

To the Secretary General of the United Nations:

The people of Syria and Iraq are facing immense suffering due to years of war and violent unrest. We believe that the lives, livelihoods and freedoms of all people in Syria and Iraq should be protected and guaranteed. This includes the Christians.

The church in both these countries has played a vital role in society for almost 2,000 years and is committed to being a place of hope and compassion for the years to come. Yet Christians continue to face significant targeted violence and persecution and need urgent change to ensure a future in their homelands.

We cannot stand by while Christians and others in the Middle East face unprecedented threat. We must give them hope.

Therefore, we urge you to use your good offices on behalf of Christians and other religious groups in Syria and Iraq to:

- Ensure that the current and future legal frameworks in Syria and Iraq fully promote and protect the equal and inalienable rights of all their citizens, irrespective of race, religion or other status
- Ensure the dignified and continued improvement of living conditions for all citizens, but especially for returning refugees and the internally displaced – including through the provision of adequate housing, education and jobs
- Identify and equip religious leaders and faith-based organisations to play a constructive and central role in reconciling and rebuilding both Syrian and Iraqi societies.

## PETITION FAQs

### Why should I sign?

Syrian and Iraqi Christians have told us what needs to be done to give them a future in their countries. This truly global petition is a practical way to make sure their voices are heard and their future guaranteed.

### What will you do with the petition?

In December 2017, the Open Doors team and partners will present this petition to the new Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) – the one person who has oversight over all the issues raised. It will have a huge impact if we can get this on their agenda at the beginning of their term in office. In addition, colleagues and partners around the world will raise these calls with those who can truly make a difference on the ground.

### Why one million?

Such a significant number will maximise the impact when we present it to the new Secretary General of the UN in December 2017. It will also send a clear message to Christians in the

Middle East that they are not forgotten, but can join with many others around the globe who are speaking out for them.

### Why now?

Thanks to everyone who signed our *Save Syria* petition in 2013, the UN recognised that Christians were especially vulnerable within the Syrian crisis. But now Christians in Syria and Iraq want people at the highest levels to recognise the contribution they can make to the positive rebuilding of their nations. They want a reason to stay – a chance to go home. And for that they need a secure sense of hope for the future: equality, dignity and responsibility.

### Will it make a difference?

Over 300,000 people signed our 2013 *Save Syria* petition. The suffering faced by Christians in Iraq and Syria was recognised by the UN and became mainstream knowledge.

In 2010, over 428,000 people signed the *Right to Believe* petition campaigning against the

'defamation of religions' resolution at the UN. This resolution has not been tabled since 2012 – a great victory for religious freedom.

These campaigns show how speaking out in advocacy makes a real difference. With you our voice is louder and clearer when we approach those positioned to deliver the recommendations of this campaign. Moreover, we have an advocate in heaven – prayer and advocacy are a powerful and important combination.

### Why should I give you my email address?

You do not need to provide your email address if you already receive communications from Open Doors; we will keep you up to date with the campaign in our normal communications. If you don't already receive communications, we would love to keep you in touch with news of the campaign and what is happening to Christians in Syria, Iraq and other parts of the world. Your address will not be given to any third party.

### How were the calls of the petition decided?

We conducted extensive consultations with Christians in Syria and Iraq between September 2015 and April 2016 to ascertain how they understand their role in society and how we can stand alongside them. The resulting recommendations defined the content and calls of this petition.

### What else can I do?

Please lift your voice to our advocate in heaven and pray for Christians in Syria and Iraq. You can also spread the word and ask your friends and family to sign the petition. Plus you can make a donation to provide ongoing practical support for displaced families in Syria and Iraq.

### What does Open Doors do?

Open Doors is active in more than 60 countries, supplying Bibles, leadership and livelihood training, trauma care and emergency aid in support of Christians persecuted for their faith.

