



ROYAL PARK WALK HELPS IRAQI CHRISTIANS

Category: News

Richmond, Surrey, UK



Many hundreds of Christians in Iraq have been forced to flee their country without any possessions during the Iraq war. The Bishop of Iraq leads this walk in Richmond Park to raise money to support them.

BSN: 0835A

STORY: IRAQI CHRISTIANS CHARITY WALK

LOCATION: RICHMOND PARK, SURREY, UK

DATE SHOT: AUGUST 25, 2008

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AUDIO: NATURAL SOUND AND ENGLISH SPEECH

DURATION: 3.28

SHOT LIST:

(Richmond Park, Surrey)

1. Pan across car park at Pembroke Lodge in the park showing people assembling for charity walk
2. Gv preparations
3. C/u t-shirt showing fund-raising efforts for Iraqi Christians in Need (ICIN)
4. Var preparations before the walk
5. SOT (English speech) super : Nada Tappuni, co-organiser, ICIN Charity Walk
"It is a..
6. Gv walk begins
7. C/u walkers with t-shirt for Iraqi Christians in Need
8. C/u walker sticking poster for charity walk to a post
9. Gv walkers descending hill in Richmond Park
10. SOT (English speech) super : Joe Obayda, Executive Council, ICIN
"Many people think..
11. Gv walkers descend hill
12. Pan from Richmond Hill showing River Thames and walkers on riverside path
13. SOT (English speech) super : Joe Obayda, Executive Council, ICIN
"We have church..
14. Gv walkers walking up Richmond Hill from town centre
15. Pan from walkers heading for the finish to River Thames

SUGGESTED INTRO:

Iraqi Christians put on their walking boots for charity in Richmond Park to the south-west of London on Monday (25/8). Their walk in the park was to raise funds and highlight the plight of Iraqi Christians who have been forced into exile because of the conflict in their country.

SCRIPT:

A bank holiday morning in the park is generally a time for relaxation and recreation, but one group of walkers gathered with a more serious object in mind.

Iraqi Christians in Need became an official charity in Britain in May last year. It highlights the plight of those who have had to flee their homeland, often in fear of their lives.

SOT (English speech) super: Nada Tappuni, co-organiser, ICIN Charity Walk

"It is a very sad story and a very heart-breaking one because these people are being forced to leave their homes and their parents' homes who have been set up there for many, many years and overnight; and they don't have anything else to do other than leave; they could have left before, they chose to stay there because they believed in their own country and now they are forced to believe that they don't have a country and that's heart-breaking, really."

They have found refuge elsewhere, in Syria, in Jordan and also in Britain but it is, understandably, a shattering experience to find yourself uprooted in such circumstances.

Their community felt further threatened by the kidnapping and subsequent murder of the Chaldean bishop Rahho along with his driver and two bodyguards in Mosul in February of this year.

The charity, working with other organizations, is helping to fund aid to Iraqi refugees wherever they are.

Christianity in Iraq has deep roots. Though the majority of the population has been Muslim for centuries, the Christian heritage in Iraq is significant.

SOT (English speech) super: Joe Obayda, Executive Council, ICIN

"Many people think that Christianity came from the west but actually, Christianity was in Iraq, it came to Iraq by Saint Thomas five hundred years before the arrival of Islam. There were something like 1.3 million, they

used to be five per cent of the Iraqi population, something like 1.3, 1.4 million but now there are about half of them remaining in Iraq.”

The funds raised from efforts such as the walk in the park and other activities including concerts and Christmas fairs will be distributed by a variety of outlets.

Providing the basic necessities of life is a priority but so is highlighting the dangers facing the existing Christian community in Iraq.

The Iraqi charity has also encountered a strong response to their efforts in Britain.

SOT (English speech) super : Joe Obayda, Executive Council, ICIN

“We have church appeals and actually the church appeals, most of them are conducted through local churches and the British public have been really so generous, we are overwhelmed with their generosity and with their help.”

No-one is pretending that the short-term future for displaced Iraqi Christians is certain. Many may decide that it would be better to create a new life elsewhere, though this would mean turning away from a country which has been home to their families for centuries.

But the charity is doing its best to support their daily needs as well as offer hope that they are not forgotten by the rest of the world.

(AE/..)

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