



JUSTITISMINISTERIET

Udlændingeafdelingen

Folketinget
Udvalget for Udlændinge- og Integrationspolitik
Christiansborg
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Kontor: Asyl- og Visumkontoret
Sagsbeh: Anne-Marie Træholt
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Hermed sendes besvarelse af spørgsmål nr. 234 (Alm.del), som Folketingets Udvalg for Udlændinge- og Integrationspolitik har stillet til justitsministeren den 1. februar 2013. Spørgsmålet er stillet efter ønske fra medlem af Folketinget Martin Henriksen (DF).

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Spørgsmål nr. 234 (Alm.del) fra Folketingets Udvalg for Udlændinge- og Integrationspolitik:

”Ministeren bedes redegøre for situationen for flygtninge i Syrien, der tilhører Det Mandæiske Trossamfund, herunder ønskes en vurdering af de forfølgelser, som dette trossamfund er udsat for i og omkring Syrien. Endelig bedes ministeren redegøre for, hvad der gøres fra det internationale samfunds side for at beskytte denne minoritet. Spørgsmålet stilles bl.a. på baggrund af UUI alm. del – bilag 41 og 62.”

Svar:

1. Justitsministeriet har indhentet et bidrag fra Udlændingestyrelsen om foreliggende baggrundsoplysninger vedrørende det mandæiske trossamfund. Se vedlagte bilag A.

2. Justitsministeriet har endvidere hørt FN's Flygtningehøjkommissariat (UNHCR) vedrørende genbosætning af mandæiske flygtninge, der opholder sig i Syrien. UNHCR har oplyst, at der aktuelt er registreret 71.000 flygtninge hos UNHCR i Syrien. 63.500 af disse er af irakisk herkomst. Aktuelt befinder der sig i Syrien ca. 2.200 mandæiske flygtninge.

UNHCR har desuden oplyst, at andelen af tvangsfordrevne blandt irakiske religiøse mindretal er væsentlig højere end blandt den irakiske befolkning som helhed. Således tilhører ca. 20 pct. af alle registrerede irakiske flygtninge i regionen et religiøst mindretal.

Derudover har UNHCR bl.a. oplyst, at UNHCR – siden iværksættelsen af en omfattende genbosætningsindsats i 2007 i forhold til irakiske flygtninge – har været særligt opmærksom på de mandæiske flygtninges beskyttelsesbehov og fortsat er det. Dette har resulteret i, at irakiske mindretal, herunder mandæere, udgør en relativt høj procentdel af de flygtninge, der er blevet genbosat fra den mellemøstlige region, inklusive Syrien, til tredje-lande. Omkring to tredjedele af det samlede antal af mandæiske flygtninge, som UNHCR har registreret gennem de sidste fire år, er blevet forelagt for lande, der modtager kvoteflygtninge som led i et genbosætningsprogram. Mandæiske flygtninge udgør over 6 pct. af alle de irakiske flygtninge, der er blevet genbosat fra den mellemøstlige region, særligt fra Syrien – hvorimod de kun udgør 2,4 pct. af det samlede antal registrerede irakiske flygtninge i regionen. Siden iværksættelsen af genbosætningsprogrammet i 2007, har UNHCR forelagt over 62.000 irakiske flygtninge, inklusive reli-

giøse mindretal, for lande, der modtager kvoteflygtninge, med henblik på genbosætning ud af Syrien.

3. Justitsministeriet kan desuden henvise til besvarelsen af udvalgets spørgsmål nr. 241 (alm. del) for så vidt angår genbosætning i Danmark af personer tilhørende trossamfundet Den Mandæiske Manda.

4. Justitsministeriet kan endelig oplyse, at EU-Kommissionen blandt andet på baggrund af et udtrykkeligt ønske fra ministrene for retlige og indre anliggender i EU har oplyst at ville udvikle et omfattende regionalt program for udvikling og beskyttelse i Mellemøsten indenfor rammerne af EU's samlede migrations- og mobilitetsstrategi (GAMM) i samarbejde med relevante internationale partnere. Dette forventes implementeret gennem et program under dansk ledelse og med supplerende bidrag fra bl.a. Nederlandene. Indsatserne vil blive gennemført af FN-organisationer, NGO'er og andre udviklingsaktører.

5. Aktuelt har det internationale samfund fortsat et omfattende fokus på den humanitære indsats i relation til krisen i Syrien, som fortsat forværres. Den danske humanitære bistand i relation til krisen i Syrien har i 2012 og frem til 18. marts 2013 udgjort knap 225 millioner danske kroner.

Bilag A. Udlændingestyrelsens Landedokumentation har per den 21. februar 2013 oplyst følgende om baggrundsoplysninger vedrørende det mandæiske trossamfund:

”Landedokumentation i Udlændingestyrelsen har i forbindelse med en fact finding mission til Erbil og Sulaymaniyah i Nordirak (KRI) og til Amman, Jordan i 2009 blandt andet indhentet oplysninger om situationen for det mandæiske mindretal i Irak. Af Udlændingestyrelsens fact finding rapport fra 2009¹ fremgår følgende oplysninger [på engelsk: *Sabean Mandaean*] (p. 35):

“The international organisation (B) in Amman stated that the US Department of State has reported that the total number of Sabean-Mandeans has now been reduced to between 3,500 and 5,000 compared to an original population of 30,000. The reason for the vulnerability of this particular group is its lack of tribal network, and the fact that they live scattered. In 2007 and beginning of 2008 there were an increased number of attacks, including kidnappings. It was added that Sabean-Mandeans are still targeted in Missan, Basra and Baghdad. The perpetrators are both insurgents and criminal gangs. The gangs might exploit the present situation and might exploit that the Sabean-Mandeans are a minority group. The international organisation (B) in Amman added that the Sabean-Mandeans are perceived to be wealthy and this is one reason for this group to be targeted by criminal groups.”

Derudover har Landedokumentation søgt baggrundsoplysninger om mandæere i de tilgængelige kilder.

UNHCR oplyser i en statistisk rapport fra november 2011, at der blandt 177.376 registrerede UNHCR flygtninge fra Irak er et mandæisk mindretal på i alt 4.489 svarende til 2,5%, heraf 3.974 i Syrien (2 i Iran, 462 i Jordan, 18 i Libanon, 31 i Tyrkiet og 2 i GCC-lande.)²

¹ *Security and Human Rights Issues in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), and South/Central Iraq (S/C Iraq)* Report from the Danish Immigration Service’s (DIS), the Danish Refugee Council’s (DRC) and Landinfo’s joint fact finding mission to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, KRI; and Amman, Jordan 6 to 23 March 2009

<http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/5EAE4A3C-B13E-4D7F-99D6-8F62EA3B2888/0/Iraqreport09FINAL.pdf>

² *Statistical Report on UNHCR Registered Iraqis and Non-Iraqis, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and the GCC countries*, 30 November 2011.

<http://www.iauiraq.org/documents/1590/November%202011%20Statistical%20Report%20on%20UNHCR%20Registered.pdf>

Den amerikanske årsrapport fra ”Commission on International Religious Freedom” (USCIRF)³ oplyser følgende om det mandæiske mindretal i Irak:

“Sabean Mandaean and Yazidis also have reported significant decreases in their populations. Madaeans report that almost 90 percent of their small community either has fled Iraq or been killed, leaving some 3,500 to 5,000 Madaeans in the country, compared to 50,000 to 60,000 in 2003. The Mandaean Associations Union and Mandaean leaders, refugees, and asylum seekers have told USCIRF that they do not see any future for Madaeans in Iraq and have asked that the group be collectively resettled to a third country so that their religion, language, and culture can survive. The Yazidi community reportedly numbers approximately 500,000, down from about 700,000 in 2005. The Mandaean and Yazidi communities are particularly vulnerable because a person must be born into these religions, not convert or marry into them, and they do not proselytize or seek new adherents. Additionally, Madaeans, followers of John the Baptist, are prohibited under their religion from using weapons and therefore cannot and do not defend themselves.”

En rapport fra Minority Rights Group International fra 2010 oplyser om mandæere⁴:

“The Sabian Mandaean religion is one of the oldest surviving Gnostic religions in the world, dating back to the Mesopotamian civilization. John the Baptist became its central prophet, and access to naturally flowing water remains essential for the practice of the faith. It is thought that there are around 60,000–70,000 Sabian Madaeans worldwide, many of whom lived in Iraq prior to 2003. Sectarian violence and political strife have placed Sabian Madaeans in Iraq in jeopardy, forcing many of them to flee to Jordan, Syria and elsewhere. According to the Mandaean Human Rights Group (MHRG), it investigated 22 murders, 13 kidnappings and 29 attacks from March 2008 until September 2009.- It was also noted that some killings were not for money or ransom but to terrorize the families. A substantial number of the victims were women and children. In many cases, the families were forced to sell

³ Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom May 2011, (Covering April 1, 2010 – March 31, 2011)
<http://www.uscirf.gov/images/book%20with%20cover%20for%20web.pdf>

⁴ Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq’s Minorities, published June 2010,
<http://www.minorityrights.org/10042/reports/still-targeted-continued-persecution-of-iraqs-minorities.html>

everything to pay off the ransom. Many received threats to leave the country or else be killed. Despite the ransom being paid, in some cases the killings were nevertheless carried out. Many became displaced when it was too dangerous for them to flee the country. Today it is believed that there are around 5,000 Sabian Mandaean left in Iraq.- Since marriage outside the community is akin to renouncing their culture, the likelihood of Sabian Mandaean eradication from Iraq seems very real.”

Af en rapport fra Human Rights Watch fra februar 2011⁵ fremgår følgende oplysninger:

“Since 2003, Sabian leaders estimate that scores of their community have perished, and they complained that there have been virtually no prosecutions for the murders. They said they have been targeted for a variety of reasons including their religion, their perceived wealth (many work as goldsmiths), and their inability to protect themselves without a militia of their own. Because their elders traditionally wear long beards, they have been attacked by Shia militants who have mistaken them for strictly observant Sunni Arabs (as many of the latter also grow long beards).”

Af UNHCR’s Guidelines fra april 2009⁶ fremgår følgende om mandæernes situation i Irak:

“The situation of the remaining 3,500-5,000 Sabaeen-Mandaeans - in Iraq remains of serious concern as they continue to be singled out by Sunni and Shi’ite extremists as well as criminals on the basis of their religion, profession and (perceived) wealth- In various religious edicts published on the internet, they have been denounced as “non-believers” who should be exterminated-- The fact that Mandaean generally have no tribal networks and live scattered in small groups, further increases their vulnerability.-- In addition, non-violence is a basic tenet of their religion.- According to the Mandaean Human Rights Group (MHRG), there has been an increase in the number of attacks committed against members of the community in 2007 and early 2008.- It accounted for 42 killings, 46 kidnappings, ten reported threats and 21 other attacks perpetrated between January 2007 and February 2008, many of them involving women and children. - Among those that

⁵ Human Rights Watch Report *Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion*, published February 2011
<http://www.hrw.org/en/node/95605/section/2>

⁶ ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING THE INTERNATIONAL PROTECTIONNEEDS OF IRAQI ASYLUM-SEEKERS, April 2009
<http://www.unhcr.org/4a2640852.pdf>

were kidnapped for ransom, several were reportedly killed or remained missing despite ransom payments - It was also reported that Islamic extremists threatened, kidnapped and killed Mandaean for refusing to convert to Islam - For example, on 8 September 2008, a group of men used guns with silencers to shoot three Mandaeans in their family jewelry store in a busy market in Al-Sha'ab District of Baghdad. Two brothers and an eight-year old boy were killed with multiple shots to their heads and chests; the store was reportedly looted.- In February 2008, ten members of a Mandaean family, including several children, died in a targeted rocket attack on their house in Kut (Wassit). Reportedly, they had previously received threats from Islamists- MHRG also reported about economic discrimination endured by members of the community, including refusal of employment on account of their religion.”

Situationen i Syrien

Af FN's nyhedsmail, IRIN News, fra september 2010⁷, fremgår følgende oplysninger om mandæernes situation i Syrien:

“Among the estimated 1.2 million Iraqi refugees in Syria are several thousand Mandaeans, a small religious minority on the verge of extinction in Iraq, and lacking support in Syria. Several organizations, including the Mandaean Society in Syria and the Spiritual Mandaean Council in Baghdad, have united to assist refugees coming from Iraq by organizing accommodation and support groups for widowed women, but because their numbers are small, Mandaeans as a community are particularly vulnerable. Support in Syria has been difficult to obtain, either from the Syrian authorities, or from religious organizations, said the Mandaean Associations Union. Some sources say there are 60,000-70,000 Mandaeans worldwide. They originated from Iraq and revere, among others, John the Baptist. Like many Iraqi refugees they are facing difficult times financially. “Divorce among Mandaeans in Damascus is on the rise because people can't get jobs and are running out of money. Over the past three years many have been forced to return to Iraq as their savings have dried up,” said Suhair, a Mandaean and former project coordinator for the US Agency for International Development in Baghdad. Once prominent goldsmiths, lawyers and doctors in Iraq, Mandaeans continue to be kidnapped, forced to convert to Islam or to leave the country, according to the Mandaean Human Rights Group in Damascus.”

Det har ikke været muligt at finde nyere baggrundsoplysninger om mandæernes situation i Syrien.”

⁷ IRIN News, Syria: Precarious existence of Iraqi Mandaean community, Damascus 15. September 2010