

Standing Up To ISIS



Jewish participants: Brenda Rosenberg, Sheri Schiff, Alex Stotland, Rachel Klein, Allan Gale, Heidi Budaj and Ariana Menzel.

On July 27, Dr. Ramsay Dass, president of the American Middle East Christian Congress, sent me an urgent appeal to help the Christians and other minority sects suffering from a complete ethnic and religious cleansing in the province of Mosul, Iraq. If these Christians refuse to convert or pay a penalty, they are executed by the Islamic State militants (ISIS). Their houses are marked with an “N,” the first letter of the Arabic word for Christian, “*Nasrani*” or Nazarene, and confiscated. Churches have been demolished. Businesses looted. Children beheaded.



Brenda Rosenberg

Yazidi, another religious minority in Iraq, and Christian families stripped of all belongings have fled to the top of Mount Sinjar but will soon die of thirst, malnutrition and sickness without aid.

A movie of global horror began playing in my head. Four thousand years of Jewish history flashed before my eyes: our rise to greatness in a country, only to be persecuted, held in captivity, our holy sites destroyed, forced into slavery, debased, expelled, pogroms, and 6 million Jews dehumanized and murdered in the Holocaust, just because we were Jews.

Jews know what it's like to not be heard — the world does not acknowledge the expulsion of Jews from Arab countries or our ongoing fight to be recognized as a people in our historic Jewish homeland.

My Jewish heart said I must stand with the Christians and Yazidi to stop the destructive insanity of ISIS, a violent terrorist organization bringing death and destruction to not only Iraq, but Syria as well.

I sent Dr. Dass's invitation to our local Jewish Community Relations Council, the ADL and American Jewish Committee. They saw the urgency and joined us for dinner at the Sahara restaurant to discuss the crisis.

I was thrilled to see Shia and Sunni Muslims sitting together and jointly condemning ISIS; Hindu friends offering their Temple and resources; and Ariana Menzel, AJC ACCESS and Tectonic Leader, taking the lead to create a unity candlelighting vigil on Thursday, Aug. 14, at 7:30 p.m. in Shain Park Birmingham.

Let the world know we as Jews will not stand idly by. Join with us. Stand with us.

Otherwise, history will repeat itself. □



Volunteers like these helped the United Nations distribute 2,500 mattresses, quilts and other emergency relief items to the most recent wave of displaced Iraqis to arrive in northern Iraq's Kurdistan region. These mattresses are being used in a school where 700 of the displaced settled.

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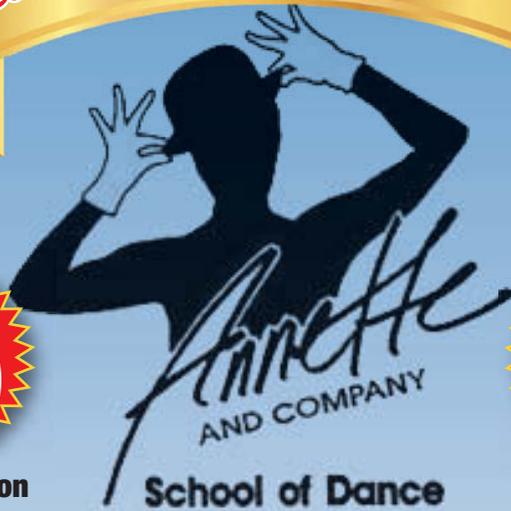
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