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## **UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

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March 21, 2007: Oral statement by Philippe LeBlanc, OP

### **Item 2: Implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March, 2006 entitled “Human Rights Council”.**

#### **Title: The situation of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons**

In his report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/38), the Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin wrote: “Responding to the protection needs of internally displaced person (IDPs) is one of the main challenges of today’s world.”

In this respect, **Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Franciscans International, Dominican Leadership Conference, Pax Christi International, International Catholic Peace Movement, Congregations of St. Joseph and Sisters of Mercy of the Americas** express their deep concern for the Iraqi internally displaced persons and refugees. There are about 1,800,000 Iraqi displaced persons in the country. An estimated 100,000 Iraqis leave their country each month, including many of Iraq’s best educated professionals. Approximately 2,000,000 Iraqis have fled since the 2003 invasion.

The humanitarian needs of these people are extreme and urgent. An immediate response to the humanitarian crisis is required to attend to the basic needs of those have left their homes because of the ongoing war in their country. Furthermore,,current refugee assistance and support for the internally displaced are extremely under-funded.

Middle Eastern countries, including Syria and Jordan have shown openness in welcoming the refugees. As the numbers have increased, the overburdened public services of the host countries are becoming overwhelmed by the increased refugee population. According to UNHCR estimates, Syria has taken in 1,000,000 Iraqis, Jordan, 750,000, Egypt, 80,000-130,000. The US Administration announced on February 15, 2007 that it would grant asylum for up to 7000 refugees over the next year.

#### **Recommendations**

**Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), Franciscans International, Dominican Leadership Conference, Pax Christi International,**

**International Catholic Peace Movement, Congregations of St. Joseph and Sisters of Mercy of the Americas strongly recommend:**

-that the international community through the United Nations seek ways and means to provide basic services including food, clothing, shelter as well as medical and educational services to the Iraqi people who have left their homeland seeking refuge in neighboring countries.;

- that western countries, especially the United States, Great Britain and the Allied Nations that are currently in Iraq, open their doors to the Iraqis as they seek safety and security for their families;

-that the United Nations refugee services seek support from the international community so that basic services are provided for the Iraqis who have been displaced and are living in other regions of Iraq.

We also urge the international community through the United Nations to take with utmost seriousness its responsibilities for the monumental and long-term challenge of the recovery and reconstruction of Iraq, devastated both by long-term sanctions and the ravages of war.

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N.B. The written statement can be found on the website of *Dominicans for Justice and Peace* at; [www.un.op.org](http://www.un.op.org)