
CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ'S KIRKUK ENJOY PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS

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Christians in Iraq's northern city of Kirkuk on Tuesday celebrated Christmas in the Kalp al-Akdes Church, where they prayed for peace after years of terrorism and political turmoil.

Church priest Yousef Toma told Anadolu Agency that Iraq's war-weary Christians now looked forward to a peaceful Iraq.

According to Toma, Iraqi Christians -- especially those in Kirkuk and Mosul -- were enjoying a peaceful Christmas for the first time in four years.

Iraqis are finally comfortable now that the region has been purged of the Daesh terrorist group, he said.

Sefa Sabah, a Christian member of Kirkuk's provincial council, said the region's Christian communities were desperate for reconstruction and development in the country's post-Daesh era.

Iraqis must now forge a degree of national unity, Sabah told Anadolu Agency, and we must act together in order to achieve this.

In the summer of 2014, Daesh overran much of northern and western Iraq.

Late last year, officials in Baghdad declared that Daesh's military presence in Iraq had been all but destroyed following a three-year conflict that ended with the fall of Daesh-held Mosul.

The Iraqi army, however, continues to wage frequent campaigns against Daesh "sleeper cells", which allegedly remain active in certain parts of the country.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/christians-in-iraqs-kirkuk-enjoy-peaceful-christmas/1348613>

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