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NGO in Special Consultative Status at the United Nations

DOMINICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE STATEMENT ON DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP RAHHO

The Dominican Leadership Conference is deeply saddened and outraged by the death of Monsignor Paulos Faraj Rahho, the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul, Iraq, who was kidnapped on February 29, 2008. Archbishop Rahho's kidnapping and murder is an offense against God and the values held dear in Christianity and Islam. We extend our sincerest condolences to all the Christians of Iraq in this difficult and painful time and promise them our prayers and solidarity.

The Dominican Family has been in Iraq for more than 250 years. Our Iraqi Dominican Sisters and Brothers have lived with and worked alongside their neighbors for centuries. We are conscious of our long tradition of dialogue with Muslims as we recall the words of the 138 Muslims who addressed Christians throughout the world on October 13, 2007 "Love of the neighbor is an essential and integral part of faith in God and love of God, because in Islam, without love of the neighbor there is no true faith in God and no righteousness. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "None of you has faith until you have love for your brother as you have love for yourself."

As a Christian, Archbishop Rahho was called to the challenge of the New Testament "If it is possible and depends on you, be at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18) and to the commandment of Jesus to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Ultimately Archbishop gave his life for these values. The Roman Catholic Church expressed its "high regard for Muslims" at the Second Vatican Council in the Declaration entitled *Nostra Aetate* (October 28, 1965). We are also aware that Muslims are told in the Holy Qur'an 5:18 that "you find that those who are closest in love to those who believe, are those who say, 'We are Christians'...." (**ولتجدن اقربهم مودة للذين امنوا الذين) (قالوا انا نصارى**).

As Christians and Muslims, therefore, we find ourselves challenged to respond to the best values in both our faiths, and not only to condemn violence, war and injustice but to work actively and together for a world of peace and justice. We call upon all Christians and Muslims to pray for the soul of Archbishop Rahho and for peace and justice for all the people of Iraq. **رحم الله عليه ;eRequiescat in pac.** May he rest in peace.

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