

## ***For Immediate Release***

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### **Building Hope in Iraq: Successful Chicken Farm Initiative**

Philadelphia, PA- The first two chicken farms in a crucial economic revitalization program on Iraq's northern Nineveh Plains are now successfully operating thanks to a collaboration between Stand With Iraqi Christians (SWIC), International Christian Concern (ICC), and Christian chicken farmers. The positive impact of each farm is immediate and enormous: approximately 134 jobs are created or supported, and \$48,000 (60% of which remains locally), is infused into the Iraqi economy. Prior to the utter destruction of ISIS (Da'esh), this area on the Nineveh Plains was known as "Chicken City." Signs of hope are evident in photographs of the two farms, with their workers busily tending chicks. Other farmers are ready and waiting to begin rebuilding their lives once funding is available.

*Bishop Michael Lewis, of the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, said, "I think what you are doing is fantastic. So, the primary thing is 'thanks.' Another thing I'd like to add is tell your friends, get more involved, spread in your state, spread across the country."*

Christians have always played a vital role in Iraq's economy, developing a variety of agricultural sectors, particularly chicken and livestock farming. Prior to ISIS, the city of Qaraqosh was home to up to 100 poultry farms. Due to persecution many people were killed, and many more were displaced or became refugees. Today, with stability increasing, former chicken farmers with the skills and the desire to rebuild the poultry industry are returning to the area. The objective is to launch two additional farms in July, and four more through October as an economic catalyst for the entire area. With sufficient funding these men will help to create jobs, care for their families, bring economic growth, foster community development, and instill pride in a people long without hope. The jobs positively impacted through this initiative include farm laborers, live chicken sellers, chicken hatchery businesses, feed sellers, veterinary staff, truckers, butchers, grocers, restaurateurs, and a multitude of other small community businesses that reopen in a recovering economy.

*"The SWIC initiative in chicken farming speaks to the need for sustainable economic development in a region devastated by violent conflict. The local commercial infrastructure,*

*being destroyed during the fight to reclaim territory from ISIS, needs to be restored to its former levels for job creation and food production. This is a far-reaching effort to start to reclaim hope for a prosperous future for the people of the Nineveh Plain.” The Rev. Canon Robert D. Edmunds, Middle East Partnership Officer, The Episcopal Church*

Chicken farms are a demonstrably sound investment because chicks are inexpensive, grow to maturity quickly, and produce a lean source of locally raised, sustainable, healthy protein. Many global organizations endorse chicken farming as one way to combat extreme poverty and improve nutrition—two of the four United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that this initiative supports.

## **About**

Stand With Iraqi Christians (SWIC) supports, through friendship and material aid, the right of Christians and their communities in Iraq to survive and thrive. In 2015, Father Christopher Bishop of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church (Radnor, PA) launched SWIC, a grass roots mission to address the plight of Christians of all denominations struggling in Iraq. His first trip at the height of the war is documented in the video “*Where is Our Place?*” available free on the SWIC Web site [www.standwithiraqichristians.org](http://www.standwithiraqichristians.org). SWIC became a non-profit group under the 501(c)(3) IRS designation of The Episcopal Church in 2017, works closely with the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and St. George’s Anglican Church in Baghdad, and collaborates with a number of organizations including ICC (International Christian Concern).

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## **Stand With Iraqi Christians (SWIC)**

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## **Related Links**

[www.standwithiraqichristians.org](http://www.standwithiraqichristians.org)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdcPIXpmoA7Jbtpji1y5xmw>

<https://www.facebook.com/standwithiraqichristians>

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