Iraq Letter 2
June 26, 2014

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

We would like to write an update, about the situation in Karakush- Iraq. As you probably heard there has been some unrest in the area.

First of all, Karakush- Baghdeeda is 30 km north east of Mosul. There are about forty thousand Christian people living there. It is the largest Christian community in Iraq. Yesterday, the 25th of June, some combat began between ISIL and the Kurdish army, which started about 4:00 pm and has not stopped since. The fighting forces stood on opposite sides of Karakush, shooting cannons at each other, in the middle of this combat were civilian homes.

Most people left and sought refuge in the towns near Karakush, other cities like Duhok and Erbil, and surrounding areas. In fact, there are less than a hundred left, including the bishop and some priests in Karakush. People are so scared; they have left the town, leaving everything behind. They don’t know where to go or when they will be able to return to their homes, if that ever happens.

Concerning the sisters (Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena), we all left today as of June 26 and we were among the last people to leave. This is our second time leaving our home in the past three weeks. We are in a safe place in our convents in different locations. Thanks be to God. We have been visiting some people who had nowhere to go and they were put in nearby schools. They left with very little and they have almost nothing. The church is providing food and mattresses to sleep on in the public schools.

The situation is very difficult. All the negotiations failed between the two parties. The government is not taking part in anything. We don’t really know who is responsible for what is happening. The media is not saying anything about the situation, which is really unfair. As of now, we have learned that the ISIL and the Kurdish army have started fighting again, after they have stopped for few hours giving time for people to leave the town.

We ask you to pray for us. It is hard to pray when you live in such a volatile situation, but we believe in your prayers.

Maria Hanna OP
And the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena –Iraq