

**VISIT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE DIYANET AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER**

Ankara

28 November 2014

[Link](#)

[...] Especially tragic is the situation in the Middle East, above all in Iraq and Syria. Everyone suffers the consequences of these conflicts, and the humanitarian situation is unbearable. I think of so many children, the sufferings of so many mothers, of the elderly, of those displaced and of all refugees, subject to every form of violence. Particular concern arises from the fact that, owing mainly to an extremist and fundamentalist group, entire communities, especially – though not exclusively – Christians and Yazidis, have suffered and continue to suffer barbaric violence simply because of their ethnic and religious identity. They have been forcibly evicted from their homes, having to leave behind everything to save their lives and preserve their faith. This violence has also brought damage to sacred buildings, monuments, religious symbols and cultural patrimony, as if trying to erase every trace, every memory of the other. [...]