

= Paulos Faraj Rahho =

Archbishop Mar Paulos Faraj Rahho ( Arabic : ????? ??? ??? , B?lus Fara? Ra?? ; Syriac : ?????? ?  
? ?? ??? , Paul?s Fara? Ra?? ; 20 November 1942 ? February or March 2008 ) was the Chaldean  
Catholic Archeparch of Mosul , in the northern part of Iraq .

Also known as Paul Faraj Rahho and Paulos Faradsch Raho , he was an ethnic Assyrian , born in  
Mosul , where he lived almost his entire life . The city of Mosul has a long established community of  
Chaldean Catholics . Rahho came to worldwide attention in 2008 when he was kidnapped by  
gunmen and subsequently found dead in Mosul , an event that drew condemnation from the Vatican  
and foreign governments .

= = Biography = =

Paulos Faraj Rahho was born to an Assyrian Catholic family in 1942 . He spent nearly all his life in  
Mosul , a city with one of the largest and oldest Christian populations in Iraq . In 1954 , he entered  
the St. Peter 's junior and major seminary in Baghdad in order to become a priest . After his  
ordination on June 10 , 1965 he briefly worked in Baghdad before being appointed to St. Isiah 's  
Church in Mosul . Between 1974 and 1976 , Rahho completed his religious studies with a Licentiate  
in Theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas , Angelicum in Rome .

Rahho later founded the church of the Sacred Heart in Tel Keppe , a town some 12 miles ( 20 km )  
north of Mosul . He also opened an orphanage for handicapped children .

= = = Archbishop of Mosul = = =

On January 12 , 2001 , the Synod of Bishops of the Chaldean Catholic Church elected him  
archbishop of the Archeparchy of Mosul . On February 16 , 2001 , he was ordained Chaldean  
Archbishop of Mosul , giving him responsibility for around 20 @,@ 000 Catholics in ten parishes .  
He was ordained by Mar Raphael I Bidawid , the Patriarch of Babylon . His church is known in Mosul  
as Safina ( The Ship ) , but parishioners called it the Holy Spirit Church .

= = = Unease with Sharia = = =

Rahho expressed disquiet at the moves to incorporate Sharia law more fundamentally into the Iraqi  
constitution , and continued throughout his life to lead worship in difficult situations . During his 2007  
trip to Rome , with the patriarch of Babylon Emmanuel III Delly who was then appointed cardinal ,  
Rahho confided that he had been threatened by gunmen in his native town . Following the start of  
the Iraq war , persecution of Christians in Iraq increased dramatically . Rahho commented on the  
precarious situation of Chaldean Christians in an interview with Asia News shortly before his  
kidnapping .

= = Kidnapping and death = =

Late on February 29 , 2008 , according to a report given by the Catholic News Service , Archbishop  
Rahho was kidnapped from his car in the Al @-@ Nur district of the city ; his bodyguards and driver  
were killed . According to church officials , " gunmen sprayed the Archbishop 's car with bullets ,  
killed two bodyguards and shoved the bishop into the trunk of a car . In the darkness , he managed  
to pull out his cellphone and call the church , telling officials not to pay a ransom for his release "  
they said . " He believed that this money would not be paid for good works and would be used for  
killing and more evil actions , " the officials said . Other reports stated that also investigators  
believed the archbishop may have been shot at the time of the kidnapping .

The kidnappers demanded Christians contribute to the jihad , through jizya . The captors also  
demanded the release of Arab ( non @-@ Iraqi ) detainees and that they be paid \$ 3 million for  
Rahho 's release . The kidnappers also demanded that Iraqi Christians form a militia to fight the US

forces .

On March 13 , 2008 , it was reported that the Archbishop 's body had been found buried in a shallow grave near Mosul . Officials of the Chaldean Church in Iraq said they had received a call telling them where the body was buried . Reports over the cause of death were contradictory . An official of the morgue in Mosul said the archbishop , who had health problems , including high blood pressure and diabetes , might have died of natural causes . Police at the Mosul morgue said the Archbishop " appeared to have been dead a week and his body bore no bullet wounds " . Nineveh Deputy Governor Khasro Goran stated that when relatives and authorities went to the location specified by the kidnappers and found the body , it had " gunshot wounds " . The identity of those behind his murder is disputed . Some Assyrians within the community believe Al @-@ Qaida and other Sunni Arab factions were behind the murder . Other Christians in Mosul , including the archbishop 's family , believe that it was the Kurds who ordered his assassination . Kurdish authorities ordered an investigation and subsequently made several arrests , though their reports have failed to convince the family .

Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahho is believed to be the highest @-@ ranking Chaldean Catholic clergyman to have been killed in the Iraq war . The funeral services were held in the town of Karamlesh , with Chaldean Catholic Cardinal Emmanuel Delly in presence .

= = = International reactions = = =

Vatican City : Pope Benedict XVI stated the murder was " an act of inhuman violence that offends the dignity of the human being . " " The pope also denounced the 5 @-@ year @-@ long Iraq war , saying it had provoked the complete breakup of Iraqi civilian life . ' Enough with the slaughters . Enough with the violence . Enough with the hatred in Iraq ! ' Benedict said to applause at the end of his Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter 's Square . "

Iraq : Prime Minister Nouri al @-@ Maliki said " the attack was the work of a criminal gang intent on provoking religious strife . "

United Kingdom : British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said " His [ Archbishop Rahho 's ] kidnapping was a cowardly act perpetrated by individuals who have rejected dialogue and peaceful politics . His killing represents an appalling act of premeditated violence . My thoughts are with the Archbishop 's family . "

United States : President Bush was quoted as saying " I send my condolences to the Chaldean community and the people of Iraq . The terrorists will continue to lose in Iraq because they are savage and cruel . " The Arab American Institute said " This despicable act against a peaceful leader of a vulnerable ( Chaldean ) minority community violates every moral code . "

Chaldean Catholic Church : Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly , who broke down and wept during funeral services in Karamles , urged Christians on Friday not to seek revenge for the death of the archbishop .

= = = Aftermath = = =

One of the killers , named Ahmed Ali Ahmed , was found and arrested . Ahmed was an Al @-@ Qaida in Iraq cell leader in Mosul . On 19 May 2008 , the Iraqi Central Criminal Court sentenced Ahmed to death . However , high representatives of the Chaldean Catholic Church opposed the death sentence . In his will , Rahho called upon the Iraqi Assyrian Christian community to work with Muslim and Yazidi Iraqis to develop ties across religious divisions within Iraq .