

## **Table of Contents**

- ***The Genocide of Christians in the Middle East seen from Washington***
- ***US Senate Resolution on Genocide in Iraq/Syria***
- ***Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania: Resolution on the genocide of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa***
- ***Christians press to call ISIL violence 'genocide'***
- ***Letter to John Kerry re: Middle eastern genocide declaration***
- ***USCIRF statement on the designation of victims of genocide, persecution, and crimes against humanity in Syria and Iraq***
- ***Kirsten Powers: John Kerry should recognize Christian genocide***
- ***Iraq may repeal child conversion law***
- ***Sinjar: Mass grave of Yazidi women executed by Isis discovered in Iraq***
- ***Winter is coming for Mosul refugees: We need your help***
- ***US Government must designate ISIS attacks as genocide for all groups***
- ***Iraq passes law forcing children to convert to religion of Muslim parent***
- ***Twice attacked church reopens in Baghdad, but is it too late for Assyrians?***
- ***ISIS burn Assyrian Woman, 80, in North Iraq***
- ***What everyone gets wrong about the persecution of Christians in Iraq***
- ***Islamic State militants blow up Assyrian church in Syria***
- ***The Genocide of Assyrians that started in Iraq continues in Syria***
- ***Between the millstones: UNPO releases report on state of Iraqi minorities since fall of Mosul***
- ***IS publishes Women's Manifesto***

---

## **The Genocide of Christians in the Middle East seen from Washington**

### ***IDC Prompts Hillary Clinton to Use 'G' Word at Townhall in New Hampshire***

IDC/ In Defense of Christians (09.01.2016) - On December 31, 2015, In Defense of Christians (IDC) President Toufic Baaklini made the following statement:

"Yesterday evening at a town hall meeting, IDC New Hampshire supporter Father Andrew Nelson asked Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 'Tonight, with all of us here, will you join those leaders, faith leaders and secular leaders and political leaders from both the right and the left, in calling what is happening by its proper name: Genocide?'

"Secretary Clinton responded, 'I will because we now have enough evidence.' She added, 'What is happening is genocide, deliberately aimed at destroying not only the lives but

wiping out the existence of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East in territory controlled by ISIS, and so I agree with you."

### ***Marist Poll: Americans Say ISIS is Committing Genocide Against Christians***

On December 31, the Knights of Columbus Published a poll which finds that most Americans say ISIS is committing genocide against Christians:

"By a wide margin, most Americans agree with the presidential candidates of both parties in calling ISIS' atrocities against Christians in the Middle East "genocide," according to a KofC-Marist poll conducted this month.

"Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush, Mike Huckabee and Martin O'Malley have all called the situation genocide.

"By almost 20 points, 55 percent to 36 percent, Americans agree that this targeting of Christians and other religious minorities meets the U.N. definition of genocide.

"In addition, nearly 6 in 10 Americans (59 percent), say they have heard "a great deal" or "a good amount" about the targeting of Christians and other religious minorities in the region by ISIS."

To read more, click here: <http://prn.to/1J5cIHC>

### ***IDC Board Members and Chairman Royce Write Letter to Secretary Kerry***

IDC Board Members Professor Robert Destro and Dr. Thomas Farr signed an important left-right, ecumenical coalition letter that was sent on Dec. 4 to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, requesting a meeting to brief him about genocide confronting Iraq and Syria's Christian communities. Signatories represented a broad range of distinguished religious leaders and scholars.

On December 23, Chairman Royce, along with 29 Members of the House of Representatives, also sent a letter to Secretary Kerry asking that the State Department acknowledge and respond to the aforementioned letter signed by IDC's Board Members, and expressing his concern that the administration may exclude Christians from a potential genocide determination.

In the letter to Secretary Kerry, the members write: "We are gravely concerned by persistent press reports that the Administration is preparing a genocide finding that would apply only to Yazidis, and may avoid judgment about whether ISIL is also committing genocide against Christians and the other minorities it is eliminating. ... At the hands of ISIL, Christians and other minorities have faced mass murder, crucifixions, sexual slavery, torture, beheadings, the kidnapping of children, and other violence deliberately calculated to eliminate their communities from the so-called Islamic State."

The signed letter is available here: <http://1.usa.gov/1PtKOlh>

### ***Statement by the President on Persecuted Christians at Christmas***

On December 23, President Obama released the following statement (<http://1.usa.gov/1YDv0kL>):

"During this season of Advent, Christians in the United States and around the world are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. At this time, those of us fortunate enough to live in countries that honor the birthright of all people to practice their faith freely give thanks for that blessing. Michelle and I are also ever-mindful that many of

our fellow Christians do not enjoy that right, and hold especially close to our hearts and minds those who have been driven from their ancient homelands by unspeakable violence and persecution.

"In some areas of the Middle East where church bells have rung for centuries on Christmas Day, this year they will be silent; this silence bears tragic witness to the brutal atrocities committed against these communities by ISIL."

On December 28, IDC Executive Director Kirsten Evans told Newsmax, "In Defense of Christians is grateful to President Obama for making this year's annual Christmas message an opportunity to manifest solidarity with and raise awareness about the terrible plight of the Christian community under ISIS."

### ***Senators Introduce Companion Resolution to H. Con. Res. 75***

On December 18, Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) introduced for himself and Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Mark Kirk (R-IL), and Roger Wicker (R-MS) a bipartisan resolution, S. Res. 340, denouncing the genocide against Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. Click here to read the Arabic translation of the resolution by IDC Iraq Adviser Loay Mikhael.

The companion house resolution, H. Con. Res. 75, which was introduced by Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE) in September, now has 170 co-sponsors.

IDC is working with a broad, bi-partisan coalition of American and international religious leaders, activists, and scholars in urging the administration to officially recognize the genocide ISIS has waged against Assyrian Chaldean Syriac Christians, Yezidis, and other ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.

At IDC's National Leadership Convention in September, more than 120 IDC state chapter leaders from across America, in an unprecedented show of unified political action on behalf of the Christians of the Middle East, pressed lawmakers to support H. Con. Res. 75, meeting with over 250 Congressional offices in a day.

Please ask your representative and senators to co-sponsor H. Con. Res. 75 and S. Res. 340 if they have not already! Click here to see if your representative has co-sponsored H. Con. Res. 75 and here to see if your senators have co-sponsored S. Res. 340.

### ***United Kingdom Parliamentarians Write to PM Cameron About Christian Genocide***

On December 21, Lord Alton & Rob Flello, MP led a letter signed by more than sixty parliamentarians from both Houses to PM Cameron calling for the slaughter of Christians and Yazidis in Syria to be named as a genocide and requesting to meet with the Prime Minister:

"We write to ask you to meet a delegation of Members from both Houses and all parties to discuss our profound concern at what is now clearly best described as "genocide" being perpetrated by Daesh against minority communities including Iraqi and Syrian Christians, Yazidis and other vulnerable groups.

"There is now clear evidence that this genocide includes assassinations of Church leaders; mass murders; torture, kidnapping for ransom in the Christian communities of Iraq and Syria; sexual enslavement and systematic rape of Christian girls and women; forcible conversions to Islam; destruction of churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and Christian artifacts; and theft of lands and wealth from Christian clergy and laity alike.

ISIS has made its own public statements taking "credit" for mass murder of Christians, and expressing its intent to eliminate Christian communities from its "Islamic State".

To read more, click here: <http://bit.ly/1O6sNgk>

### ***Parliament of Lithuania Passes Genocide Resolution, European Parliamentarian Prepares to Introduce Resolution***

On December 15, the Parliament of Lithuania passed a resolution by massive majority calling on the United Nations and the European Parliament to recognize the plight of Christians in the Middle East - and in particular in Syria, Iraq, Iran and north Africa - as an act of genocide and to act in accordance with the UN Human Rights Convention. Lithuania is the first EU country to legally call the persecution of Christians in the Middle East by Isis and other Muslim organisations genocide.

A European Parliamentarian is also working on a resolution calling on EU members to recognize that the Islamic State terror group is committing genocide against Christians and other minorities, and act upon that reality. Lars Adaktusson of the Christian Democrats party in Sweden wrote (November 30) in an op-ed published by Swedish newspaper Svenska Dagbladet that there is clear evidence IS wants to eradicate all Christians from the territory it has captured across Iraq and Syria.

To read more, click here: <http://bit.ly/231GBz4>

---

## **US Senate Resolution on Genocide in Iraq/Syria**

HRWF (21.12.2015) -

### **114TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION S. RES. II**

#### **IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Mr. CASSIDY submitted the following resolution**

**Expressing the sense of Congress that the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS or Da'esh) is committing genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, and calling upon the President to work with foreign governments and the United Nations to provide physical protection for ISIS' targets, to support the creation of an international criminal tribunal with jurisdiction to punish these crimes, and to use every reasonable means, including sanctions, to destroy ISIS and disrupt its support networks.**

Whereas communities of Assyrian Chaldean Syriac, Armenian, Evangelical, and Melkite Christians; Kurds; Yezidis; Shia and Sunni Muslims; Turkmen; Sabea-Mandean; Kaka'e; and Shabaks have been an integral part of the cultural fabric of the Middle East for millennia;

Whereas Article I of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed at Paris December 9, 1948 (in this resolution referred to as the "Convention") states that "the contracting parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and punish";

Whereas Article II of the Convention declares, "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.";

Whereas Article III of the Convention affirms, "The following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.";

Whereas section 1091 of title 18, United States Code, declares that "genocide" occurs when any person "whether in time of peace or in time of war and with the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in substantial part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such (1) kills members of that group; (2) causes serious bodily injury to members of that group; (3) causes the permanent impairment of the mental faculties of members of the group through drugs, torture, or similar techniques; (4) subjects the group to conditions of life that are intended to cause the physical destruction of the group in whole or in part; (5) imposes measures intended to prevent births within the group; or (6) transfers by force children of the group to another group";

Whereas subsection (c) of section 2441 of title 18, United States Code, defines a "war crime" as conduct "(1) defined as a grave breach in any of the international conventions signed at Geneva 12 August 1949, or any protocol to such convention to which the United States is a party; (2) prohibited by Article 23, 25, 27, or 28 of the Annex to the Hague Convention IV, Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, signed 18 October 1907; (3) which constitutes a grave breach of common Article 3 [defined in subsection (d) of such section as torture, cruel or inhuman treatment, performing biological experiments, murder, mutilation or maiming, intentionally causing serious bodily injury, rape, sexual assault or abuse, or taking hostages] when committed in the context of and in association with an armed conflict not of an international character; or (4) of a person who, in relation to an armed conflict and contrary to the provisions of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended at Geneva on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996), when the United States is a party to such Protocol, willfully kills or causes serious injury to civilians";

Whereas the United States has ratified the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000, and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which defines "trafficking in persons" to mean "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" and defines exploitation as including, "at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs";

Whereas section 2331 of title 18, United States Code, defines "international terrorism activities" as "activities that (A) involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the

conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum”;

Whereas section 2332b of title 18, United States Code, defines “terrorism transcending national boundaries” to include “(A) kill[ings], kidnap[ing]s, maim[ing]s, commit[ing] an assault resulting in serious bodily injury, or assaults with a dangerous weapon [of or on] any person within the United States; or (B) creat[ing] a substantial risk of serious bodily injury to any other person by destroying or damaging any structure, conveyance, or other real or personal property within the United States or by attempting or conspiring to destroy or damage any structure, conveyance, or other real or personal property within the United States; in violation of the laws of any State, or the United States,”;

Whereas the President, with the assistance of the Secretary of State and the Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, is obligated under section 2113(b) of the ADVANCE Democracy Act of 2007 (22 U.S.C. 8213(b)) to “collect information regarding incidents that may constitute crimes against humanity, genocide, slavery, or other violations of international humanitarian law” and “shall consider what actions can be taken to ensure that any government of a country or the leaders or senior officials of such government who are responsible for crimes against humanity, genocide, slavery, or other violations of international humanitarian law identified [pursuant to such collection of information] are brought to account for such crimes in an appropriately constituted tribunal”;

Whereas Article I of the Convention and the law of nations confirm that government authorities are obligated to prevent and punish acts constituting genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes;

Whereas, on July 10, 2015, Pope Francis, Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, declared that the pattern of crimes committed by ISIS and its affiliates against Christians are part of a “third world war, waged piecemeal, which we are now experiencing,” and that “a form of genocide is taking place, and it must end”;

Whereas the 2011 Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities declares, “Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States... [and that] our options are never limited to either sending in the military or standing by and doing nothing... The actions that can be taken are many—they range from economic to diplomatic interventions, and from non-combat military actions to outright intervention.”;

Whereas, on August 7, 2014, President Barak Obama authorized military action to stop ISIS’ advance in northern Iraq, and “to prevent a potential act of genocide” against Yazidis stranded on Mount Sinjar;

Whereas, on August 7, 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry, stated that ISIS’ “campaign of terror against the innocent, including Yezedi and Christian minorities, and its grotesque and targeted acts of violence bear all the warning signs and hallmarks of genocide”;

Whereas, on March 27, 2015, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that its mission to Iraq had “gathered reliable information about acts of violence perpetrated against civilians because of their affiliation or perceived affiliation to an ethnic or religious group,” that the “[e]thnic and religious groups targeted by ISIL include Yezidis, Christians, Turkmen, Sabea-Mandeans, Kaka’e, Kurds and Shia,” and stated, “It is reasonable to conclude, in the light of the information gathered overall,

that some of those incidents may constitute genocide. Other incidents may amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes.”;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has “called on the U.S. government to designate the Christian, Yazidi, Shi’a, Turkmen, and Shabak communities of Iraq and Syria as victims of genocide by ISIL” and USCIRF Chairman Robert P. George has observed that “ISIL’s intent to destroy religious groups that do not subscribe to its extremist ideology in the areas of Iraq and Syria that it controls, or seeks to control, is evident in, not only its barbarous acts, but also its own propaganda”; and

Whereas members of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, in their Appeal to Congress of September 9, 2015, stated, “ISIS’s mass murders of Chaldean, Assyrian, Melkite Greek, and Coptic Christians, Yazidis, Shi’a Muslims, Sunni Kurds and other religious groups meet even the strictest definition of genocide.”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) finds that ISIS, its affiliated organizations, and supporters are parts of an expanding, worldwide criminal network, the members of which have pledged allegiance to its leaders, support its actions, act in concert with them, claim credit for targeted killings, and are “fully aware that [their] participation” and support will “assist [in] the commission” of its crimes;

(2) finds that ISIS and its affiliated organizations maintain sophisticated publishing and social media networks that seek to attract others to join their efforts and seek to incite the murder of Christians, Shia and Sunni Muslims, Jews, and any religious believers who refuse to convert to their Wahhabi-Salafist jihadist ideology;

(3) declares that ISIS and its leaders should be charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes;

(4) calls upon on the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute any United States citizens or residents alleged to be perpetrators of or complicit in these crimes and to report back to Congress regarding what steps are being taken to investigate and prosecute those involved;

(5) calls upon the Secretary of the Treasury to investigate and sanction any person, organization, business, or financial institution alleged to be perpetrators of or complicit in these crimes, and to report back to Congress regarding what additional authority, if any, is needed to disrupt ISIS financial support networks;

(6) calls upon the President to authorize the Secretary of State, the Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, and the Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues to cooperate in the collection of forensic evidence of crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, slavery, or other violations of international humanitarian law;

(7) calls on the President, the Secretary of State, and the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, working through the United Nations Security Council and its member states as appropriate, to accelerate the implementation of an immediate, coordinated, and sustained response to provide humanitarian assistance, protect civilians, build resilience, and help reestablish livelihoods for displaced and persecuted persons in their communities of origin;

(8) calls upon the contracting parties to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed at Paris December 9, 1948, and other international agreements forbidding war crimes and crimes against humanity, to join with

the United States in an effort to investigate, arrest, and prosecute individual and organizational perpetrators responsible for these crimes;

(9) calls upon the United Nations Secretary-General to urge all United Nations member states to cooperate in an international effort to investigate, try, and prosecute all cases in which prosecutors can prove that the accused have committed crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide;

(10) makes an urgent appeal to the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to collaborate on the establishment and operation of domestic, regional, and hybrid international tribunals with jurisdiction to punish the individuals and organizations responsible for or complicit in actions that constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and

(11) commends the Governments of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and every other country sheltering and protecting individuals fleeing the violence of ISIS.

**For further information: the resolution can be viewed on [www.Congress.gov](http://www.Congress.gov) at: <http://1.usa.gov/1TcEke4>**

**Further Reading:**

[Isil killings should be recognised as genocide \(Telegraph.co.uk\)](http://www.Telegraph.co.uk)

[Politicians call on PM to act on Islamic State's "genocide" against Christians \(Premier.org.uk\)](http://www.Premier.org.uk)

[Minority killings by IS should be recognised as Genocide \(Anglicanmainstream.org\)](http://www.Anglicanmainstream.org)

[Prime Minister must act on "genocide" in Middle East \(thecatholicuniverse.com\)](http://www.thecatholicuniverse.com)

[MPs put pressure on David Cameron to recognise Christian 'genocide' in the Middle East \(thetablet.co.uk\)](http://www.thetablet.co.uk)

[David Cameron urged to recognise ISIS slaughter of Christians as genocide \(The Catholic Herald\)](http://www.TheCatholicHerald.com)

---

## **Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania: Resolution on the genocide of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa**

HRWF (15.12.2015) -

No XII-2177 Vilnius

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,  
*having regard to:*

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stating that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance; the United Nations Human Rights Committee believes that pursuant to the principle of freedom of religion and belief, the protection of all beliefs, including theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, should be ensured;

United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution No 28/34 of 7 April 2015 defining 'complex situations that might lead to genocide', recognisable from 'possible warning signs [...] such as the existence of groups at risk, the massive, serious and systematic violation of human rights, the resurgence of systematic discrimination and the prevalence of expressions of hate speech targeting persons belonging to national, ethnic, racial or religious groups, especially if they are uttered in the context of an actual or potential

outbreak of violence' and 'condemning impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and emphasizing the responsibility of States to comply with their obligations under relevant international instruments to end impunity and, to that end, to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other massive, serious or systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to avoid their recurrence and to seek sustainable peace, justice, truth and reconciliation';

The European Parliament Resolution of 10 October 2013 on recent cases of violence and persecution against Christians, notably in Maaloula (Syria), Peshawar (Pakistan) and the case of Pastor Saeed Abedini (Iran) (2013/2872(RSP)); the European Parliament Resolution of 12 March 2015 on recent attacks and abductions by Da'esh in the Middle East, notably of Assyrians (2015/2599(RSP)); the European Parliament Resolution of 28 April 2015 on the persecution of Christians around the world, in relation to the killing of students in Kenya by terror group Al-Shabaab (2015/2661 (RSP)), which bring to the foreground the cases of killing and persecution on religious grounds in the Middle East, North Africa and other countries;

United Nations General Assembly Resolution No 69/323 of 11 September 2015 proclaiming 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime;

*stating that:*

for thousands of years, Christians of the Middle East and North Africa and other religious minorities have been an integral part of the region's culture;

the so-called 'Islamic State' (Da'esh) and other extremist militant groups in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria, and North Africa are currently exerting systematic violence against Christians and representatives of other religious minorities, who have been the target of such violence already since 2003, and millions of representatives of such minorities have been forced to leave their ancestral home and to become refugees;

Christians and other religious minorities in this region were and are being killed and kidnapped, suffered and continue to suffer serious bodily and mental harm, also sexual slavery and other forms of violence, and that all of this is done consciously and on purpose, resulting in a breach of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted in Paris on 9 December 1948 (hereinafter: the 'Convention');

such atrocities are pursued with a specific goal, namely, to eradicate and to expel from the region Christians and other religious minorities, destroy their cultural heritage, thus resulting in a breach of the Convention;

genocide is a crime under international law for which the persons committing it are punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals, as stipulated in Article 4 of the Convention;

Article 1 of the Convention emphasises that 'the Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.');

Article 2 of the Convention specifies that 'in the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.');

Article 3 of the Convention establishes that 'the following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;

- (e) Complicity in genocide.';

on 10 July 2015 Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, announced that Christians of the Middle East are suffering genocide which needs to be 'denounced. In this third world war, waged piecemeal, which we are now experiencing, a form of genocide – and I stress the word genocide – is taking place, and it must end.';

in its report of 27 March 2015 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that 'ethnic and religious groups targeted by ISIL include Yazidis, Christians, Turkmen, Sabea-Mandeans, Kaka'e, Kurds and Shia' and that, in the light of reliable information about the acts of violence perpetrated against civilians because of their affiliation to an ethnic or religious group, 'it is reasonable to conclude that some of those incidents may constitute genocide. Other incidents may amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes.'

**states** that atrocities against Christians and representatives of other religious minorities which are targeted in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria, and North Africa on religious grounds only may be considered as genocide and, by this Resolution, is treated as the crime of genocide under international law;

**reminds** all the Contracting Parties to the Convention, particularly those states whose governments and citizens in one way or another are engaged in and support genocide, of their legal obligations under the Convention;

**draws** governments' and international organisations' attention to the fact that crimes against humanity perpetrated on religious grounds and war crimes which can be treated as the crime of genocide must be condemned;

**calls on** the United Nations and the United Nations Secretary-General to take clear political leadership and recognise the atrocities being committed in the Middle East and North Africa as the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes;

**invites** the United Nations Member States, in particular members of the African Union, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, to support this Resolution, take measures to prevent further conduct of criminal persecution that may be treated as genocide and cooperate in developing international and national tribunals to punish persons responsible for genocide and in ensuring their effective functioning;

**expresses gratitude** to the governments of the Iraqi Kurdistan region, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Lebanon and other states for their efforts to shelter and protect Christians and other religious minorities until they can safely return to their homes in Iraq and Syria;

**emphasizes** that Christians and other religious minorities have the right to safe and stable life on the historic lands of their ancestors and practice of their faith without fear of persecution, deportation or death.

SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS

LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ

---

## **Christians press to call ISIL violence 'genocide'**

***The State Department should use the label for Christians as well as Yazidis, church leaders say.***

Politico (9.12.2015) - <http://politi.co/1Z0EjNS> - Christian leaders are pressing the Obama administration to declare that the Islamic State is committing genocide against Christians, a designation that could increase pressure on the president to take action to protect victims of the terrorist group.

The State Department has spent months debating whether to label the Islamic State's murderous rampage against members of a different religious minority, the Yazidis, a

"genocide," a designation that carries legal, political and historical implications and which the U.S. has rarely invoked. But now, with a decision expected soon, the administration faces growing pressure to include Iraqi and Syrian Christians under that same heavy label.

GOP Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, a 2016 presidential candidate, has raised the plight of the Christians on the campaign trail, saying they are facing a genocide at the hands of the Islamic State and should get preference in being admitted to the United States.

Around 30 Christian and other leaders, including Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the archbishop of Washington, D.C., wrote to Secretary of State John Kerry last week to request a meeting to make the case that Christians in territory controlled by the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, face genocide. One signatory, Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, testified on the issue Wednesday before a House panel.

The letter writers said they agree wholeheartedly that the Yazidis, who have faced everything from death to enslavement at the hands of the Islamic State, are victims of genocide. Their argument, however, is that the suffering of Christians rises to the same level, surpassing other labels the U.S. has tended to use such as "ethnic cleansing" or "crimes against humanity."

"The world recoiled when it learned that ISIS jihadis had stamped Christian homes in Mosul (a city in Iraq) with the red letter 'N' for 'Nazarene' in summer 2014, but the elimination of Christians in other towns and cities in Iraq and Syria began long beforehand," the letter states. "ISIS' genocidal campaign against Christians continues today, with hundreds of Christians remaining in ISIS captivity, and with summary executions, including by beheadings and crucifixions, occurring as recently as only a few months ago."

The call to designate Christians victims of genocide will likely draw plenty of sympathy in Congress. A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House, led by Reps. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.) and Anna G. Eshoo (D-Calif.), introduced a resolution in September calling the attacks on Christians and other groups in Islamic State-controlled territory a genocide. The resolution has more than 150 co-sponsors.

While labels such as "ethnic cleansing" and "crimes against humanity" all carry significant weight, "genocide" occupies a special status in the international lexicon. Because of various international treaties that America is party to, determining that a mass killing is a "genocide" could place a legal obligation on the U.S. to intervene. Members of groups deemed at risk for genocide may have an easier time being recognized as refugees, and in general the term ups the pressure on the international community to respond and the perpetrator to stop his actions. Legal phrases such as "specific intent" to destroy a group "in whole or in part" are often parsed carefully to see if a particular mass murder falls under the "genocide" label.

The State Department has been tight-lipped about the process involved in the genocide determination, and officials on Wednesday gave no time-frame for when a decision will come down or what it will be. However, past reports have indicated that the administration is leaning toward declaring that the Yazidis face genocide, while reserving judgment on the status of Christians as well as other religious minorities targeted by the ISIL.

Their decision could factor in the findings of a report by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that detailed atrocities facing religious minorities under the rule of the ISIL, whose jihadists follow an extreme form of Sunni Islam.

The report focused in particular on events in Ninewa province in Iraq between June and August 2014, and it determined that the Islamic State had "perpetrated crimes against

humanity, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes against Christian, Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, Sabaeen-Mandaeen, and Kaka'i people" in that area. In addition, the report stated: "We believe IS has been and is perpetrating genocide against the Yazidi people," whose 4,000-year old faith incorporates elements of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The U.S. has a record of trying to avoid using the term genocide, in part, some critics believe, so it does not find itself pressured to intervene in what are often fast-moving, dangerous circumstances. Determinations of genocide by the U.S. have at times come years after the killings.

Even as the Rwandan genocide was happening in 1994, U.S. officials avoided the term, out of fear by government lawyers that — according to a then-secret memo — it would commit the Clinton administration to "actually 'do something.'" Some 800,000 people died that year in the African country, most of them members of the Tutsi ethnic minority killed by the Hutu majority.

And when then-Secretary of State Colin Powell called the relentless killings in the Darfur region of Sudan a genocide in 2004, it drew plaudits and concern from the international community. It was later revealed that Powell's aides had determined that using the term "would have no immediate legal—as opposed to moral, political or policy—consequences for the United States."

Because the U.S. is leading a coalition aimed at fighting the Islamic State, and because the U.S. and its allies already have in the past intervened to save the Yazidis and others from direct onslaught — most notably during the siege of Mt. Sinjar — a designation of genocide is unlikely to see any additional U.S. military action as a direct result, although for historical and moral reasons, it would strike a chord.

Some could argue that the case of Christians in Iraq and Syria does not fall under the definition of genocide because Christians are given options under which they can stay alive. They can convert to Islam, for example, or pay a special tax to the Islamic State, to be allowed to stay under the terrorist group's rule. Unlike the Yazidis, who are often perceived by their enemies as devil-worshippers, Christians and Jews are considered "People of the Book" (the Quran) and thus subject to certain protections under Islamic law.

But the religious leaders who wrote to Kerry insist that in reality, Christians are nowhere near protected.

"We have extensive files supporting a finding that ISIS' treatment of Iraqi and Syrian Christians, as well as Yazidis and other vulnerable minorities, meets this definition (of genocide)," the letter states. "They include evidence of ISIS assassinations of Church leaders; mass murders; torture; kidnapping for ransom in the Christian communities of Iraq and Syria; its sexual enslavement and systematic rape of Christian girls and women; its practices of forcible conversions to Islam; its destruction of churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and Christian artifacts; and its theft of lands and wealth from Christian clergy and laity alike. We will also present ISIS' own, public statements taking 'credit' for mass murder of Christians, and expressing its intent to eliminate Christian communities from its 'Islamic State.'"

---

## **Letter to John Kerry re: Middle eastern genocide declaration**

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write as American citizens concerned about the vulnerable Christian and Yazidi minorities of Iraq and Syria who are being targeted for eradication in their ancient homelands solely because of their religious beliefs. We respectfully request, on an urgent basis, a meeting with a small delegation who can brief you on the continuing religious genocide confronting both these peoples.

We recently learned that a State Department finding is imminent that ISIS is committing genocide against the Yazidis. We would wholeheartedly endorse that finding, but we are deeply troubled by the prospect that the Department's statement will either omit or reserve judgment on whether ISIS is committing genocide against Christians.

Two reasons have been given for excluding Christians from the State Department's findings.

- First, we understand that the Department's statement will be based on a limited review of ISIS' actions in Nineveh, Iraq, since the summer of 2014, and that the Department lacks sufficient information about the experience of the Christian communities in Nineveh during that time to conclude that genocide took place. While your office on International Religious Freedom has requested that we provide additional information, it indicated that the final determination of when (or whether) a genocide declaration will be issued concerning Christians will be made at higher levels. We would like the opportunity to explain why the Department's geographic and temporal focus is too narrow, and to present the available evidence of ongoing genocidal acts against Christians in Syria and Iraq at a level where it can be considered before a finding is made.
- Second, a press report by Michael Isikoff indicates that one rationale for excluding Christians is that, unlike Yazidis, ISIS gives Christians a "choice": They can convert to Islam, pay an Islamic tax (jizya), or be killed, enslaved, tortured, or held hostage. The implication is that ISIS abides by traditional Islamic Sharia, under which other "People of the Book" (Christians and Jews) pay a tax in exchange for protection by their Muslim rulers. We would like the opportunity to explain why this is emphatically not the case.

The Genocide Convention defines genocide as killing and certain other acts "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." We have extensive files supporting a finding that ISIS' treatment of Iraqi and Syrian Christians, as well as Yazidis and other vulnerable minorities, meets this definition. They include evidence of ISIS assassinations of Church leaders; mass murders; torture, kidnapping for ransom in the Christian communities of Iraq and Syria; its sexual enslavement and systematic rape of Christian girls and women; its practices of forcible conversions to Islam; its destruction of churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and Christian artifacts; and its theft of lands and wealth from Christian clergy and laity alike. We will also present ISIS' own, public statements taking "credit" for mass murder of Christians, and expressing its intent to eliminate Christian communities from its "Islamic State".

The world recoiled when it learned that ISIS jihadis had stamped Christian homes in Mosul with the red letter "N" for "Nazarene" in summer 2014, but the elimination of Christians in other towns and cities in Iraq and Syria began long beforehand. ISIS genocidal campaign against Christians continues today, with hundreds of Christians remaining in ISIS captivity, and with summary executions, including by beheadings and crucifixions, occurring as recently as only a few months ago.

Pope Francis has called ISIS' crimes against Christians by their proper name: "genocide." The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Christian leaders in the Middle East have done so as well. We agree, and are hopeful that, once you have seen the evidence, you will too.

The United States is rightly viewed the world's leading defender of vulnerable minorities, and as an historic safe-haven for those fleeing religious persecution. A declaration of genocide by the State Department is thus a unique opportunity to bring America's religious communities together to pursue the truth, to support the victims, and to bear witness to the noble principle of "Never Again."

It is, therefore, critically important that the State Department consider the best available evidence before making any official pronouncement that rejects allegations that Christian are, along with Yazidis, targets of ongoing genocidal acts.

We respectfully request that you meet personally at your earliest convenience with a small delegation drawn from those who have signed this letter. We have included point of contact information in a separate attachment.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Carl Anderson  
Supreme Knight, Knights of Columbus

His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian  
Ecumenical Director and Legate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

Robert A. Destro  
Professor of Law, The Catholic University of America

Most Reverend Bishop Julian Dobbs  
Missionary Bishop of Convocation of Anglicans in North America

Dr. Thomas F. Farr  
Director Religious Freedom Project, Georgetown University

Robert P. George  
McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University

Ambassador Mary Ann Glendon  
Harvard Law School

Aram Hamparian  
Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America

Shirley V. Hoogstra, J.D.  
President, Council For Christian Colleges & Universities

Harry R. Jackson, Jr.  
Pastor, Hope Christian Church  
Bishop, International Communion of Evangelical Churches

Most Reverend Sarhad Y. Jammo  
Chaldean Bishop of Western U.S.A.

Philip Jenkins  
Distinguished Professor of History, Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University

Brian Katulis  
Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

Rev. Benedict Kiely  
Founder, [www.Nasarean.org](http://www.Nasarean.org)

The Very Reverend James A. Kowalski  
Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine

Most Reverend Gregory Mansour  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

R. Albert Mohler Jr.  
President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

Rev. Johnnie Moore  
President, The KAIROS Company  
Author, *Defying ISIS*

Russell Moore  
President, Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

Mark L. Movsesian  
Frederick A. Whitney Professor and Director, Center for Law and Religion  
St. John's University School of Law

Archbishop Oshagan  
Prelate, Armenian Apostolic Church of America (Eastern)

Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou  
Assoc. Prof. of Conflict Resolution, The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Tufts University

Rev. Bob Roberts, Jr.  
Senior Pastor, NorthWood Church, Keller, TX Rev.

Dr. Samuel Rodriguez  
President, NHCLC/CONELA, Hispanic Evangelical Association

Nina Shea  
Director and Senior Scholar, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett  
President, Lantos Foundation

Very Rev. Nathanael Symeonides  
Ecumenical & Interfaith Officer, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Frank Wolf  
Distinguished Senior Fellow of the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative;  
Wilson Chair in Religious Freedom, Baylor University

Dr. George O. Wood  
General Superintendent, Assemblies of God, USA Cardinal

Donald Wuerl  
Archbishop of Washington

---

## **USCIRF statement on the designation of victims of genocide, persecution, and crimes against humanity in Syria and Iraq**

USCIRF (7.12.2015) - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) today issued the following statement:

***USCIRF calls on the U.S. government to designate the Christian, Yazidi, Shi'a, Turkmen, and Shabak communities of Iraq and Syria as victims of genocide by ISIL. USCIRF also urges American and other world leaders to condemn the genocidal actions and crimes against humanity of ISIL that have been directed at these groups and other ethnic and religious groups. USCIRF further urges a firm condemnation of the brutal persecution of, and crimes against humanity committed against, Sunni Muslims by the Assad regime in Syria and by ISIL in the case of Sunni Muslims who refuse to embrace their extremist ideology.***

***USCIRF also encourages continued and robust efforts by the U.S. and international community to bear witness to these crimes and make additional designations of genocide and crimes against humanity, whether those are committed by ISIL, the Assad regime, or others, as appropriate.***

USCIRF recommended in its 2015 Annual Report that the U.S. government should support a referral by the UN Security Council to the International Criminal Court to investigate ISIL's atrocities against religious groups in both Iraq and Syria. USCIRF also noted in its 2015 Report that the al-Assad regime systemically has targeted and massacred Sunni Muslims, thereby creating the environment in which ISIL could rise and spread, threatening the entire region and all religious communities that reject its violent religious ideology, with the smallest religious minority communities facing an existential threat.

***"The hallmark of genocide is the intent to destroy a national, racial, ethnic, or religious group, in whole or in part. ISIL's intent to destroy religious groups that do not subscribe to its extremist ideology in the areas in Iraq and Syria that it controls, or seeks to control, is evident in, not only its barbarous acts, but also its own propaganda," said USCIRF Chairman Robert P. George. "The al-Assad regime also must be held to account for its targeting primarily of Sunni Muslims and the crimes against humanity that it is committing."***

For more information, please see USCIRF's chapters in the 2015 Annual Report on [Iraq](#) and [Syria](#).

To interview a USCIRF Commissioner, please contact USCIRF at [media@uscirf.gov](mailto:media@uscirf.gov) or 202-786-0613.

---

## **Kirsten Powers: John Kerry should recognize Christian genocide**

***Secretary of State should call what ISIL is committing by its true name.***

USA Today (7.12.2015) - <http://www.usatoday.com/opinion/> - In October, Islamic State militants in Syria demanded that two Christian women and six men convert to Islam. When they refused, the women were publicly raped and then beheaded along with the men. On the same day, militants cut off the fingertips of a 12-year-old boy in an attempt to force his Christian father to convert. When his father refused, they were brutalized and then crucified.

This has become the plight of Christians in the Middle East at the hands of the Islamic State terrorist group, also known as ISIL or ISIS. Beheadings, crucifixions and enslavement are visited on those who won't renounce their religious beliefs. The lucky ones are murdered in more mundane ways or driven from their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

This year, we've seen a Newsweek cover exclaiming, "The New Exodus: Christians Flee ISIS in the Middle East," and a New York Times piece asking, "Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East?" The progressive Center for American Progress noted in a March report, "Some of the oldest Christian communities in the world are disappearing in the very lands where their faith was born and first took root."

One of the authors of that report, Brian Katulis, has joined forces with a diverse group of Christian leaders to urge the State Department to recognize what everyone else seems to see: There is an ongoing genocide against Middle Eastern Christians at the hands of radical jihadists.

In a letter sent to the State Department on Friday, a wide range of leaders — including the archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, and the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference — requested a meeting with Secretary of State John Kerry to make this case. (They've received no response.) The matter is urgent as the State Department is reportedly poised to designate ISIL's attacks on the Yazidi people of Iraq as a genocide.

There is no question that the Yazidis — who practice an ancient religion that includes elements of Islam and Christianity — deserve the designation. But so do Christians, along with other minority religious groups in the Middle East. A 2014 United Nations resolution noted that while many members of religious and ethnic minorities are suffering at the hands of ISIL, Christians and Yazidis deserved special mention.

Indeed, ISIL warned Christians in a video, "You will not have safety, even in your dreams, until you embrace Islam." Its militants or their affiliates have murdered or claimed credit for killing Christians in Syria, Nigeria, Iraq and Libya.

Invoking the "g word" to recognize this fact is not just a matter of semantics. "Groups that have been designated as genocide victims are much more likely to receive military protection, including arming and training their militias for self-defense, which is always the best defense against genocide," Gregory Stanton, the former president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, told me. "Members of such groups are also much more likely to receive preferential treatment as bona fide refugees under the U.N. convention and protocols on the status of refugees."

The State Department's disinterest in including Christians in its potential genocide designation appears to rely on a recent Holocaust Memorial Museum report asserting that, unlike Yazidis, Christians are not suffering from genocidal attacks because ISIL gives them the "option of paying the jizya (tax) to avoid conversion or death" because they, like Jews, are "people of the book."

Unfortunately, this does not reflect reality. The Hudson Institute's Nina Shea — a renowned religious persecution expert — explained to me: "In most examples, there is no jizya option (for Christians) and, when there is, the ISIL tax is so ruinous that eventually a family's property and even children are taken and all are forced to convert to Islam or killed."

ISIL doesn't want to co-exist with Middle Eastern Christians. It wants to eliminate them. Let's stop pretending otherwise and call this what it is: a genocide.

---

## **Iraq may repeal child conversion law**

***Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) considers the proposed modifications to Iraq's National Card Law to be in flagrant violation of their citizens' right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as provided for in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Requiring children to adopt a religion that is not of their choosing should be condemned by all democratic societies. This is especially true in Iraq, where the respect of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities weighs heavily in the country's pursuit of national unity at this time in its history. HRWF appeals to the Iraqi government to change course on these changes to the law and urges the European Union and United States to use what influence they have to help strengthen the religious freedom of all communities in Iraq.***

AINA (19.11.2015) - Kadhim AlShamari, member of Iraq's parliament, has criticized the law that would force non-Muslim children to become Muslims and called for its repeal.(AINA) -- The Iraqi Council of Representatives passed a resolution yesterday requiring modifications to the National Card Law that was approved on October 27, and which included a paragraph that will force Christian and non-Muslim children to become Muslims if the male parent converts to Islam or if their non-Muslim mother marries a Muslim. Non-Muslim step-children of a Muslim father would be forced to become Muslims.

The law was specified in Article 26, paragraph 2, which says "children shall follow the religion of the converted parent to Islam."

Salim Jibouri, the President of the Council, asked the non-muslim Parliamentarians who had boycotted the meetings to return to the sessions of the Council and contribute to the rewriting of the law, noting that the Council will take the necessary steps to amend the law and work to ensure that all ethnic groups enjoy the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

Assyrians, Yazidis, Mandeans, Kakai and Bahai leaders vigorously fought the law and their representatives walked out of the Parliament session in protest after it was passed. They had requested to add the following sentence to paragraph 2: "minors will keep their current religion until the completion of 18 years of age, then they have the right to choose their religion" -- but this was rejected.

At the outset of the session yesterday, which was attended by 206 parliamentarians, Jubouri said "the Presidency of the Council took into account the boycott of the council meetings by the Parliamentarians of the religious groups and their demand of amending the national card law in order to achieve justice for their constituents, expressing the Council is eager for these parliamentarians representing other components to resume their work with their other colleagues."

The council's decision to rewrite the law, which received the support of 140 votes of the total present, was the effect the boycott of the parliamentarians of non-Muslim religious

groups of the parliament meetings as well as vigorous opposition by churches and civic leaders.

Kadhim al-Shammari, MP from the National Coalition, said on Wednesday the decision of the Council to take the necessary measures to amend the national card law to ensure the rights of minorities is an important step to restore national unity and strengthen the social fabric.

in a statement published by Sky Press, Al-Shammari said "Iraqi society represents a diverse and beautiful mosaic of various nationalities and religions, and this diversity is a strength of the country when building the right foundation for a peaceful coexistence and respect for the rights of others."

He added the "Parliament's decision to take the necessary measures to amend Article 26 of the national card law, represents an important and bold step to pave the way towards giving all the components of civil and religious rights without marginalization."

He praised "...all efforts made within the Parliament of political blocs and the private representatives of minorities and their strong stand to regain the rights for their constituents in addition to the efforts of the Presidency and religious endowments to succeed. We hope it culminates with the amending the article once and for all, including giving full freedom for all groups in the selection of the religion that suits them according to the principle of no compulsion in religion."

---

## **Sinjar: Mass grave of Yazidi women executed by Isis discovered in Iraq**

### ***Locals described seeing clumps of hair, bones, money and keys in the mass grave***

The Independent (15.11.2015) - <http://ind.pn/1j3aoUY> - A mass grave believed to contain the remains of more than 70 members of Iraq's Yazidi minority has been unearthed east of Sinjar town, following an offensive against Isis by Kurdish forces.

Isis overran the Yazidi territory of Sinjar in north-west Iraq in August 2014 and began systematically killing, capturing and enslaving thousands of its inhabitants - in what the United Nations has said may have constituted an attempted genocide.

The mayor of Sinjar and local Yazidis who visited the site described clumps of hair, bones, money and keys which they believed to older women from the village of Kocho.

Younger women from the town were taken into sexual slavery, but the older ones were led behind away before gunfire was heard a short while later.

US President Barack Obama said he wanted to prevent a genocide of Yazidis when he first authorised air strikes against Isis militants, who consider the Yazidi minority devil worshippers.

The Yazidis are a religious sect whose beliefs combine elements of several ancient Middle-Eastern religions.

Kurdish forces retook Sinjar town on Friday in a two-day offensive backed by airstrikes from the US-led coalition.

Mahma Xelil, the mayor of Sinjar, said the grave would be left undisturbed so experts could analyse the remains and collect evidence for a case to recognise the atrocities inflicted on the Yazidi community as genocide.

Several mass Yazidi graves have already been uncovered in the area north of Sinjar mountain, which was taken by Isis in December last year.

The Kurdistan region's security council said 28 villages had been taken during Operation Free Sinjar and more than 200 square kilometres (77 square miles) freed from militant control.

Most of Iraq's Yazidi population are still living in camps in the Kurdistan region.

More than 2,000 women remain in Isis captivity.

---

## **Winter is coming for Mosul refugees: We need your help**

***Fr. Samir El-Youssef Khoury writes a letter of thanks for aid received through AsiaNews. As winter closes in, refugees face new urgent challenges: finding warm clothes, paying for school buses, milk and bread for children.***

AsiaNews (16.11.2015) –

Dear Fr. Bernardo,

First of all I would like to thank you for what you and AsiaNews are doing for us and for our cause: whenever you write about our tragedy, the tragedy of the Christian and Yazidi refugees, you help us to find solidarity, and overcome a sense of having been abandoned. Thousands of people are fleeing with nothing, for over a year they have been coming here in order to escape certain death; the roots of Christianity, sowed on the Nineveh plain since the first century AD have been completely wiped out in one night.

One year on from the beginning of this tragedy, we – the local Chaldean Church- are now finding it almost impossible to continue facing this emergency, to come to the aid of these people who are fleeing from the fury of IS: we feed them, we give them accommodation and guarantee medicines and care.

In this way we help to keep the flame of hope alive in them that our Lord Jesus Christ is with them that even if they had to leave everything they had in His name and for His love, He will never abandon them.

But our aim is also to show that God's love is for all the people that we are hosting: there are not only Christians (of all denominations) but also Yazidis and Muslims. And to do this, we rely on the charity of the Catholic Church worldwide, our patriarch of the Chaldean Church Mar Luis Sako and the good will of many Christians and benefactors such as the readers of AsiaNews.

For over a year now we have been living in a difficult situation: the people are out of work and we have to give them not only food but also "cash" to buy bread and milk and other small necessities, for them and for their children . Every day we face a list of bills to pay (fuel, water, electricity). Our daily work is not limited only to necessities: our mission as a Church is also to strengthen the faith of those who are in suffering and despair and encourage them not to be afraid. And now winter is coming and we face even greater concerns:

1) Finding the means to transport students to school, so they will not lose another school year.

2) Providing 200 families with the money to buy clothes for their children and other needs that must be addressed, especially in view of winter.

3) Paying for two electricity generators, in two refugee centers, because the electric current is supplied only a few hours a day and often not every day.

We once again appeal to your generosity and thank you in advance for any help and support you can give. We pray for you, and we ask you to do the same for us.

Fraternal greetings to you and to all AsiaNews readers.

Samir Yousif Al-khoury

**Donations can be made in a number of ways. Indicate that the donation is for 'AsiaNews - Adopt a Christian from Mosul':**

- [Via Credit Card with Paypal](#)

- [Via Credit Card from site](#) (Click on 'Your Donation - Donate')

- **Italian postal account** no. 45443009, payable to the Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere, under "causale" 'AsiaNews - Adopt a Christian from Mosul'

- **Via bank transfer** to the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME) - AsiaNews - C/C 05000/1000/00118726  
at BANCA PROSSIMA S.p.A. for social enterprises and communities, Gruppo Intesa Sanpaolo MILAN BRANCH  
Address: PIAZZA PAOLO FERRARI, 10 20121 MILANO (MI) ITALY  
Bank details/IBAN: IT98G0335901600100000118726  
Swift Code: BCITITMX  
Causale (payment for) 'AsiaNews - Adopt a Christian from Mosul'

- **Via bank draft**, addressed to  
AsiaNews c/o PIME  
Via Guerrazzi 11  
00152 Rome RM  
Italy

**For donations that can benefit from a tax deduction/credit:**

**Bank transfer:** payable to

Fondazione PIME Onlus,  
Credito Valtellinese S.C. - Piazza San Fedele, 4-20121 MILAN (Italy)  
IBAN IT 11 W 05 216 000 000 005 733 01630  
Bank Identifier Code (BIC): BPCVIT2S

Please, always send a fax (to 02.4695193) or an email (to [uam@pimemilano.com](mailto:uam@pimemilano.com)) to confirm the transfer, specifying name and address (to receive tax deduction/credit receipt).

---

## **US Government must designate ISIS attacks as genocide for all groups**

Assyrian International News Agency (14.11.2015) - <http://bit.ly/1N6NqdK> - There are reports in the media that state the Obama Administration will designate ISIS's attacks on Yazidis in Iraq as genocide, without giving the same designation to ISIS's attacks on Assyrians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria, even though these attacks targeted both groups and were conducted in tandem.

There is no question as to the suffering of the Yazidis and Assyrians. Thousands of Yazidis have been killed, Yazidi women have been captured and raped and sold as sex slaves. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis have been displaced. 200,000 Assyrians were driven from the Nineveh Plains in North Iraq last year in the ISIS attack that began -- not coincidentally -- on August 7, the Assyrian Martyrs Day. Most have not returned and are living as refugees in Arbel and Dohuk.

ISIS has destroyed or occupied 45 Assyrian churches in Mosul. It has killed Assyrians in Mosul. It has snatched Assyrian girls from the arms of their mothers, never to be seen again.

In Syria, ISIS captured 500 Assyrians, and still holds about 400 of them for ransom. ISIS attacked 35 Assyrian villages on the Khabur on February 23, killing 4, capturing 253 and causing 3,000 Assyrians to flee. It executed 3 of them on September 23 in a video. On August 7 -- again, not coincidentally -- ISIS attacked Qaryatain and captured 250 Assyrians.

ISIS has also engaged in the destruction of the Assyrian cultural heritage, both in Syria and Iraq. It destroyed the city of Nimrud, destroyed the walls of Nineveh, destroyed Assyrian artifacts in the Mosul museum. In Syria it destroyed Assyrian churches and archaeological sites.

Article 2 of UNGC lays down the meaning of genocide:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

ISIS has engaged in all of these acts against both Assyrians and Yazidis.

It is a welcome step for the U.S. government to designate ISIS's attacks as genocide, but this must apply to all affected groups, not just Yazidis. There is no rational basis for excluding Assyrians from such a designation.

We urge the U.S. Government to designate ISIS's attacks on all groups as genocide, and to name all affected groups explicitly to focus attention on the desperate plight of these minority groups.

---

## **Iraq passes law forcing children to convert to religion of Muslim parent**

AINA News (07.11.2015) - <http://bit.ly/1MYHxPG> - The Iraqi Parliament passed a law on October 27 that will force Christian children to become Muslims if the male parent converts to Islam or if their Christian mother marries a Muslim. Christian step-children of a Muslim father would be forced to become Muslims. The law was specified in Article 26, paragraph 2, which says "children shall follow the religion of the converted parent to Islam."

Assyrians, Yazidis, Mandeans, Kakai and Bahai leaders vigorously fought the law and their representatives walked out of the Parliament session in protest after it was passed. They had requested to add the following sentence to paragraph 2: "minors will keep their current religion until the completion of 18 years of age, then they have the right to choose their religion" -- but this was rejected.

The new law, part of the National Card law, is an exact copy of article 21 paragraph 65 of the 1972 constitution of Iraq. It contradicts several articles in the current constitution of Iraq, including articles 2, 14, 37 and article 42.

Chaldean Patriarch Sako met yesterday with Iraqi President Fouad Masoum and discussed this issue. The President acknowledged some of the constitutional violations the national card legislation introduced and reiterated that he will make every effort to find a realistic solution to this issue.

All of the Assyrian political parties and social organizations have expressed opposition to the law. The law has also been opposed by the following groups:

- Warka Democratic Block
- Iraqi Women's Network, comprised of over 90 women's NGOs all over Iraq.
- Iraqi Communist Party
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Netherlands
- Iraqi Democratic Union in the United States - Michigan
- Democratic Iraqi Current in Stockholm / Sweden
- Democrats stream of Iraqis in Denmark
- Iraqi Democrats Movement in Canada
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Australia
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Germany
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Britain
- Preparatory Committee for Democratic Movement in France
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Sodertalje
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Oonchobg
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Hungary
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in Norway
- Iraqi Democratic Movement in New Zealand
- Preparatory Committee for Democratic Movement in Iraqi Bulgaria

On November 4 a protest was held in front of the UN mission in Arbel by a coalition of non-Muslim groups.

---

Representatives of non-Muslim communities in north Iraq also expressed fears that the parliament of Kurdistan may follow suit. Two weeks ago the lone Assyrian Christian member of the Kurdish constitution draft committee, a woman, withdrew in protest of the radical views expressed by the Muslim members, who showed no compromise towards the civil status law that also forces underage children to follow the religion of their converted parent.

---

## **Twice attacked church reopens in Baghdad, but is it too late for Assyrians?**

Assyrian International News Agency (03.11.2015) - His Holiness Gewargis III (L), Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, conducting a service at St. George Church in Dora, Baghdad.(AINA) -- After enduring two attacks, St. George Assyrian church in Dora, a formerly Assyrian neighborhood south of Baghdad, was reopened yesterday by the newly consecrated Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. The event was attended by religious and secular leaders, including Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III, Armenian, Yazidi and Muslim leaders and government officials.

Also attending was Iraq's Deputy Minister of construction, housing and public utilities, who said his agency intends to continue to work on a set of measures for the reconstruction of destroyed churches in Iraq, and in particular in Baghdad.

St. George Church was firebombed on May 18, 2007. On April 14, 2007 an Islamic group forcefully removed the Cross from the church.

Dora was a predominantly Assyrian neighbourhood, with a population of 20,000 Assyrians. In 2004 Islamists began a terror campaign against the Assyrians. Dozens of Assyrians were killed in bombings, 500 Assyrian shops were burned in one night, churches were bombed. Muslims demanded *jizya* (poll tax) from the Assyrians. Muslims also demanded that Assyrian maidens be surrendered to them to be married off to Muslims.

The attacks caused nearly all of the 20,000 Assyrians who lived there to flee and never return. Only a few hundred Assyrians remain there.

The events in Dora mirrored the events in the rest of Iraq, where a low-grade genocide of Assyrians began in 2004. In August of 2014 ISIS drove into the Nineveh Plains in north Iraq, the last stronghold of Assyrians, causing nearly 200,000 Assyrians to flee from their homes and villages. Most have not returned.

The Assyrian population has decreased from 1.5 million in 2004 to about 300,000 today. Most have fled to Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. The majority of the refugees in those countries desire to emigrate to the West. The majority of Assyrians remaining in Iraq share the same desire, as they see no hope or future in Iraq and the Middle East.

---

## **ISIS burn Assyrian Woman, 80, in North Iraq**

(AINA (26.05.2015) - <http://www.aina.org/news/20150526165910.htm> -- According to a report by the BasNews agency, ISIS burned an 80 year-old Assyrian woman to death in a village southeast of Mosul. Citing Sa'ed Mamuzini, a representative of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) office in Mosul, BasNews stated in its report that the woman, who was from Karamlis, was burned for failing to comply with Islamic Sharia law.

Lying about 10 miles northeast of Baghdede (Qaraqosh), once the largest Assyrian city with a population of 50,000 Assyrians, Karamlis is one of dozens of Assyrian villages in the Nineveh Plains surrounding Mosul, which was partially overrun by ISIS on August 7 of 2014, causing 200,000 Assyrian to flee their villages (AINA [2014-08-07](#)). Nearly all have not returned and are living as refugees in Ankawa and Dohuk.

---

## **What everyone gets wrong about the persecution of Christians in Iraq**

The Week (10.04.2015) - Media coverage of Christian persecution in the Middle East was once all but non-existent. (A representative headline on this website last year declared, "The world's most ancient Christian communities are being destroyed — and no one cares.") And while awareness of this troubling topic hasn't quite reached Biblical proportions yet, it's certainly increasing. CBS's 60 Minutes devoted several segments to the matter, National Geographic gave it a large spread in their magazine, and most recently, Newsweek devoted their cover story to "the new exodus" of Christians from the Middle East.

The persecution of Christians in the Middle East is a real problem that deserves real attention. Attacks on churches, forced conversions, and executions — including the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya — have provoked international outcry. Though reports on Iraq vary wildly, it seems that 90 percent of the country's Assyrian-Christians have fled or died since WWII, and as a result of al Qaeda and ISIS, Assyrian-Christians have been reduced to 1 percent or less of the general population. All this caused the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to declare the flight of Christians from the region "unprecedented."

I'm an American Christian living in Iraq. I have been working for nearly a decade to save lives across this war-battered country. I am thankful for those who care about the people in this region who I have come to love so deeply.

That said, any non-sectarian observer who is actually here in Iraq can tell you that these "Whither the Christians!?" headlines are far too simplistic. The situation is more complicated than many American commentators realize. And the hand-wringing headlines may actually make things worse for those who live here.

When ISIS drove Christians out of Mosul in the summer of 2014, the West awoke to the plight of Christians in Iraq. But cramming the diverse group of victims into a tidy box marked "Christian" was not helpful. Locally, most of these "Christians" identify ethnically as Assyrians, and they are talking as much about Assyrian nationalism as religious identifiers like theology or tradition.

Western talk of "Christian persecution" generates more interest than "Assyrian genocide," as it naturally plays into the prepackaged Christianity-vs-Islam motif. But the sectarian fires that this narrative stokes could burn the very Christians — ahem, Assyrians — that Western sympathizers seek to help.

Good advocacy requires good listening, and what the Assyrians are asking for is more than the right to worship. Assyrians want an internationally recognized, self-governed province like their Kurdish neighbors. This is guaranteed to them in the Iraqi constitution, and was approved by the Council of Ministers in Baghdad in 2014. They are fighting a legal, political, and geographical fight for their homeland — not strictly for the right to believe or identify as Christians.

The American Mesopotamian Organization says "the primary mission of the [The Nineveh Plains Protection Unit (NPU)] is to 'protect the remaining Assyrian lands'" and "'liberate the Assyrian homeland of the Nineveh Plain' from the grasp of the radical Islamists," according to Newsweek. The Dwekh Nawsha, a splinter militia founded by the Assyrian Patriotic Party, speaks in similar terms.

Yes, ISIS is ostensibly persecuting Assyrians because they are Christians, but they are more than that. They talk about the pain of historic and recent expropriations by Turks, Kurds, and Arabs, and the fear that their status as a unique indigenous people will be erased by further assimilation. By glossing over the ethnic/nationalistic component of their struggle, American activists risk missing their aims and adding to their pain by wrongly framing the discussion as one of religious liberty alone.

America is a young nation of immigrants, so we do not readily understand identity and faith in terms of land, place, and ancestral heritage. For this reason, I'd expect Americans to read Newsweek's follow-on quote by a British-Assyrian with skepticism: "This is our last stand, if this fails then Christianity will be finished in Iraq."

But this bald assertion is simply taken at face value by the Newsweek author, perhaps because it supports the pre-defined narrative, even though Christians (including Assyrian, Syriac, Chaldean, Anglicans, Protestants, and converts from Islam) still exist and worship in Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Baghdad, Nasiriyah, Basra, and beyond.

The Assyrian homeland may be forever lost if persecution persists, and this should be feared and fought against. But it need not mean the end of the Christian faith and tradition in the region.

Herein lies the rub: We can't have it both ways. We can't give money to upstart American "charities" that send weapons and vigilantes to fight alongside the NPU and Dwekh Nawsha and pretend that the "Christianity" we're seeking to save is anything other than a deeply complex and entrenched ethnic, political, legal, geographic, and religious battle for land and all the meaning that comes with it.

One militiaman speaking to The Washington Post summed up the dualism that is lost on many Western commentators: "During war times, we are Assyrians. We don't let anyone humiliate us. After the war, we go home to be Christians again."

Assyrians have a constitutional and human right to live in peace inside the borders of their ancient lands. I support their right to fight for their freedom. But that fight should be waged in the name of Assyria, of Iraq, and of humanity. This land has seen enough religious wars.

---

## **Islamic State militants blow up Assyrian church in Syria**

Barnabas Fund (08.04.2015) <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Islamic-State-militants-blow-up-Assyrian-church-in-Syria?audience=GB> Early on Easter Sunday (5 April), as Christians around the world gathered to remember the resurrection of Christ, Islamic State (IS) militants blew up and levelled a church in Tel Nasri village, situated alongside the Khabur river in north-eastern Syria.

Built in 1934, the church is one of three main churches in Tel Nasri, one of 35 Assyrian villages that line the north and south sides of the Khabur river. These villages are

practically empty now after IS fighters raided villages along the south side of the river on 23 February and returned to [attack](#) villages on the north side on 7 March.

They took hostage around 280 Christian villagers, and although some were later released, there is still no news as to the fate of around 260 still being held.

The Christians living in these villages are ethnic Assyrians who speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus. Turned out of their villages and threatened not to return, residents have fled to the nearby cities of Hassake and Qamishli. Barnabas is helping to provide emergency food aid and supplies for 1,200 Christian families who have taken refuge there.

---

## **The Genocide of Assyrians that started in Iraq continues in Syria**



AINA (27.02.2015) - On Tuesday, February 23 ISIS attacked 35 Assyrian villages on the Khabur river in the Hassaka province in northeast Syria (<http://www.aina.org/news/20150223174904.htm>). At least 9 Assyrians fighters were killed defending their villages. Up to 373 Assyrians were captured. 3000 Assyrians fled from their villages and are now in shelters in Hasaka and Qamishli.

None of the Assyrians want to return. This is what they have told their bishops.

Three weeks earlier, ISIS ordered Assyrians in the region of Hasaka to remove the crosses from their churches and to pay *jizya* (Christian poll tax), warning residents that if

they failed to pay they would have to leave or else be killed (AINA: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150203164724.htm>).

The [list of atrocities](http://www.aina.org/releases/20150226225711.html) (<http://www.aina.org/releases/20150226225711.html>) against Assyrians in Syria is very long; it includes murders, kidnappings and the destruction of cultural resources, including churches and ancient Assyrian historical artifacts.

In Iraq it has been the same. With the first church bombing on June 24, 2004 there began a relentless, low grade genocide (Report: <http://www.aina.org/reports/ig.pdf>) which culminated in the displacement of 200,000 Assyrians from the Nineveh Plain by ISIS (Report: <http://www.aina.org/news/20140729115702.htm>). Where the population of Assyrians in Iraq was at 1.4 million in 2004, it has dwindled to 300,000 in 2015. Most fled to Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey --and now these same refugees will be forced to flee from Syria, along with the Assyrians of Syria.

ISIS has not only killed and displaced Assyrians in Syria and Iraq, it has destroyed the Assyrian cultural heritage. It has destroyed 118 churches in Iraq (Report <http://www.aina.org/news/20080107163014.htm>) and 6 in Syria. It has destroyed Assyrian archaeological sites and historical artifacts in Iraq and Syria.

This is genocide -- there is no other word for it. This is the erasure of a nation from the land which it has inhabited for 6764 years.

Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide lays down the meaning of genocide:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

To this we can add the destruction of the cultural heritage of a nation, including the destruction of secular and religious institutions and historical and archaeological artifacts.

All of these acts have been committed against Assyrians in Syria and Iraq in the last ten years.

It is ironic that the ISIS attacks on Assyrians in Syria is occurring in 2015, the centennial anniversary of the 1915 Turkish genocide of Assyrians, Greeks and Armenians, in which 750,000 Assyrians were killed (75%), 500,000 Pontic Greeks and 1.5 million Armenians.

This is not a coincidence. ISIS is pretty savvy and is historically informed. When ISIS pushed into the Nineveh Plain in Iraq last year, forcing 200,000 Assyrians to flee their homes, they began their invasion on August 7, which is the official Assyrian Martyrs Day, a day on which each year Assyrians remember their fallen.

How should the civilized world react to this? When a group destroys a nation it destroys the cultural heritage of the civilized world. When the Taliban destroyed the 2,500 year-old Buddhist statues in Afghanistan, the civilized world lost. When ISIS destroyed the

walls of Nineveh, the civilized world lost. When ISIS killed Yazidis, the civilized world lost. When ISIS killed Shiites the civilized world lost. When ISIS killed Assyrians the civilized world lost.

And now ISIS is destroying the very foundations of world civilization. It is in Mesopotamia where civilization as we know it began. Destroying Assyrian artifacts is ISIS's message to the world, that it aims to eradicate the very basis of its civilization because it is not Islamic.

There is no moral ambiguity in what is occurring -- ISIS is evil and the source of this evil is Islam.

The civilized world must find the courage to accept the force of its moral superiority and act on it. If it does not, the world will fall into shadow.

There is a dark veil falling on the world and it is Islam as embodied by ISIS. Who has the courage to lift this veil?

---

## **Between the millstones: UNPO releases report on state of Iraqi minorities since fall of Mosul**

UNPO (27.02.2015) - On 27 February 2015 the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), in collaboration with the Institute for International Law and Human Rights (IILHR), Minority Rights Group International (MRG) and No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ), released a breakthrough report capturing the current situation of minority groups within Iraq since the invasion of ISIS. The report follows a fact-finding mission to Iraq in November 2014 that assessed the status of Christian, Kaka'i, Shabak, Turkmen and Yezidi minorities within the country.

The launch conference, held at the International Press Centre in Brussels, was chaired by Mr William Spencer of IILHR. In his opening remarks he described how the investigation and the report had been motivated by the shocking deterioration in the status of religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq that have occurred since the invasion by ISIS of Northern Iraq in 2014. He reminded those present that although the report focuses on the role of ISIS in the persecution of minorities, the title of the report, *Between the Millstones*, was chosen to represent the long-standing discrimination that minorities have faced in Iraq; even though their situation has worsened since the involvement of ISIS, they have long suffered at the hands of the Iraqi state.

Ms Mays Al-Juboori from MRG then discussed the major findings of the report. She described how ISIS is one of the greatest sources of anti-intellectualism in the modern world. The group is founded on the principle of eliminating the diversity of cultures and religions that are present in modern Iraq through a process of cultural destruction and religious assimilation. Minorities in Iraq have been marginalised for generations and lack the tribal and centralised state security that members of the Kurds, Sunni Arabs and Shia Arabs enjoy as majority ethnic groups. This means that they are significantly more vulnerable to the will of ISIS, particularly following the campaign of terror and chaos that has accompanied the ISIS invasion.

The floor was then handed to Ms Johanna Green of UNPO who discussed the looming humanitarian crisis which is described in the report. Since the invasion of ISIS in June 2014, there have been more than 2.2 million displaced by the violence and persecution – many of whom belong to minority groups. In addition to the violence and persecution

that these Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) face, their search for humanitarian assistance is complicated by the loss of legal documents, dispossession of property and shortfalls in humanitarian resources available. Drawing on interviews she had conducted within Iraq, Ms Green described how IDPs often had no warning of the advance of ISIS and had to flee their homes without crucial identification, proper provisions and sometimes even without family members.

These problems often continued to be a problem once IDPs had reached safe areas from where to receive humanitarian assistance. Iraqi and Kurdish bureaucratic discrimination means that minorities are often left without proper assistance or the humanitarian aid they do receive from the state is second-rate. Poor preparation for winter and heavy rains plus deplorable hygiene conditions thus proved a larger problem for IDPs of minority groups – an issue that was further compounded for women whose privacy and hygiene needs are rarely met. Ms Green closed by reminding those present that all of these issues occur within a humanitarian system that has insufficient funding from the international community and lacks legal provisions within Iraq.

Ms Alison Smith of NPWJ then took the floor giving an in-depth analysis of the operations of ISIS within the context of International Criminal Law (ICL) – particularly war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Ms Smith outlined the various violations of ICL that had been committed by ISIS and the contribution that this report and its accompanying field research had made towards gathering evidence on these violations. He further stressed that the report provided evidence to show that 10 of the 16 categories of war crimes identified in ICL had been violated by ISIS in Iraq. These include summary executions, attacking civilians, conscription of child soldiers and incidents of rape. With regards to crimes against humanity, ISIS had committed 10 out of 11 categories provided by ICL. These include murder, enslavement and enforced disappearances. There was also an abundance of evidence to show that ISIS had committed genocide in Northern Iraq from the period of June-August 2014 with high probability that the genocide is still ongoing. Evidence of forced conversions, mass killings and overt statements by ISIS were claimed to be clear evidence to Ms Smith that a case against ISIS leaders can be built in the future.

William Spencer of IILHR was the final speaker and reiterated a point made by Ms Smith, that there needs to be accountability and redress in Iraq if these IDPs are to feel completely safe. Mr Spencer then outlined the key recommendations of the report. He stressed the need for sufficient funding for the international humanitarian effort in Northern Iraq; currently, only 36% of the funding that the UN has said is required has actually been secured from the international community. With this gap in funding, it is easy to see why the tools and resources needed to effectively deal with the humanitarian crisis on the ground have not made it to the field. Systematic corruption within the Kurdish and Iraqi governance structures has also created a serious issue for the humanitarian mission in the area, and until the governments are willing to make convictions, this problem will persist.

Mr Spencer finished by highlighting the fact that ISIS will not continue for ever and at some point Iraq will need to implement a post-ISIS plan of action. All panel members agreed that the international community, including those in Brussels, need to start formulating this plan now so that when ISIS is defeated, there will not be an uncertain climate in Iraq that can cause further problems for minority groups. In summary, no IDPs will return to their homes without a clear sense that they will be safe and be able to fully rebuild their lives. Following the Brussels launch of the report, which particularly targeted European policymakers and media, a second presentation will take place in Washington DC in mid-March 2015 for an American audience.

Media coverage of the report:

[El Economista \(26.02.2015\)](#)

[BBC News \(27.02.2015\)](#)

[De Wereld Morgen BE \(27.02.2015\)](#)

[Katholieknieuwsblad \(27.02.2015\)](#)

---

## **IS publishes Women's Manifesto**

RFE/RL '05.02.2015) - <http://www.rferl.org/content/islamic-state-womens-manifesto/26832051.html> - A manifesto for women published by the Islamic State (IS) group has criticized Western attitudes to women, saying that this so-called "Western model" has failed, that a woman's place is in the home, and that Western women's fashions, like earrings, are the work of the devil.

The **manifesto**, titled Women of the Islamic State, was shared on the Internet on January 23 by the IS group's all-women unit, the Al-Khanssa Brigade. An English version of the manifesto was shared on February 5 by the Britain-based anti-extremism think tank the Quilliam Foundation. It focuses on women's daily lives and the role of women in an Islamic society and in the "caliphate" (the name given by the IS group to the areas under its control).

The overarching message of the manifesto is that women should be "sedentary" while men are characterized by "movement and flux."

Women of the Islamic State does not beat around the bush, but states unequivocally that a woman's "fundamental function" is "in the house with her husband and children."

According to the manifesto, the Western idea that women should be "liberated" from the home has been a failure. This model, which is "preferred by infidels in the West" is a falsehood, according to the IS group, because the Islamic "Prophetic tradition" says that women should not leave the home even for prayer.

"Verily God has ordained this sedentary existence for women, and it cannot be better in any way," the manifesto insists.

The manifesto offers some explanations as to why it is very difficult for women to work outside the home.

"They have 'monthly complications' and pregnancies and so on," the manifesto explains, adding that women also have "responsibilities to their husbands, sons and religion."

### ***Women, Know Your Limits!***

Women of the Islamic State also -- unsurprisingly -- criticizes what it says is the Western idea that women should obtain "worldly knowledge" with the aim of trying to "prove that her intelligence is greater than a man's."

However, the manifesto does not say that women should be illiterate, but that God intended them to learn to "read and write about their religion and fiqh [Islamic jurisprudence]."

Studying for university degrees in such useless disciplines as science and other "Western" inventions is clearly a step too far for women, according to the Islamic State treatise, which is scathing about women who "flit here and there to get degrees and so on" and who "study the brain cells of crows, grains of sand, and the arteries of fish!"

### ***Earrings and hair "shaved in some places and not others" are the Devil's work***

The Islamic State's manifesto on women also covers the important issue of women's fashion which, unsurprisingly, it condemns as the work of "Iblis" or the devil.

The manifesto conflates jewelry such as earrings with plastic surgery, claiming that the devil encourages vulnerable women to "spend huge amounts of money to change God's creation" including via surgery to alter "the nose, ear, chin and nails."

The devil, according to the manifesto, preys on women in "fashion shops and beauty salons," encouraging them to have "things dangling from ears" and "hair shaved in some places and not others."

### ***Unseen and Unheard***

The IS women's manifesto insists that women should not leave the home except in "exceptional circumstances" but says that women can wage jihad in cases where an enemy is attacking her country and there are not enough men to fight.

Women are also allowed to work as doctors or teachers, but only if they observe strict Shari'a Law.

Although women are permitted to go outside in these extreme cases, the manifesto reiterates that, under normal circumstances, women should be unseen and unheard.

"It is always preferable for a woman to remain hidden and veiled, to maintain society from behind this veil," the manifesto says.

It is "legitimate" for girls to be married at the age of nine, the manifesto adds, noting that their husbands should "not be more than twenty years old."

Even if they fail to attract a husband at nine, the manifesto points out that "most pure girls will be married by sixteen or seventeen."

The manifesto ends by detailing some of the horrors that women are forced to endure in Saudi Arabia, where "women are able to work alongside men in shops like banks, where they are not separated by even a thin sheet of paper."

Saudi women are also "allowed to appear in ID photographs," while in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, "males and females are able to mingle in the hallways as if they were in an infidel country in Europe."

**HRWF Footnote:** The text of the Manifesto in English and analysis can be accessed at <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/women-of-the-islamic-state3.pdf>

---