

# CHRISTIANS TARGETED BY MIDDLE EAST TERRORISM

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The Middle East and Anatolia are the lands of Christianity's birth. Mary (pbuh) and her family lived on these lands. The Prophet John (pbuh) was born and martyred on these lands. The Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was born in the city of Bethelam, modern day Palestine and again ascended to heaven by God on these lands. This region is also considered sacred by the Jews. The oldest churches on earth, the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Resurrection, Church of All Nations, are located in the Middle East. The founding saints of Christianity spread their religion across these lands. Today, many Christians follow the footsteps of St. Paul in Anatolia and commemorate the era of Christianity's foundation. The Virgin Mary's House in the Izmir region is one of the largest Christian pilgrimage sites. The Arabian Peninsula, the lands of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Anatolia are the very heart of all three religions. No political view or entity, and certainly no terrorist group, holds the power to change this historical fact.

For centuries, a peaceful mosaic of the three religions prevailed in the region. During this period, no wars were waged on the holy lands in the name of religion. This period, dubbed the *Pax-Ottomana*, lasted until the imperialist states divided the Middle East among themselves under the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Immediately after World War I, France and Britain occupied the region, sowing the seeds of hatred between Jews and Muslims on one hand, and establishing territorial dominance through artificial borders and puppet governments on the other. Every group that rose up against the invaders was crushed mercilessly.

Following World War II, Jews and Muslims were dragged into a spiral of violence through external interventions which would last 70 years. Muslims, too, were brought into internal conflict through nationalist and sectarian ideologies, and this great sedition has completely engulfed the region's Islamic society. Now in the 21st Century, the region has virtually descended into chaos. In the span of a few decades, millions of Muslims have lost their lives while the major states of the Islamic world have fallen one after another. Another victim of this atmosphere of violence is the Christians residing in the region.

The Christian population in the Middle East further decreases with each passing day. Christian Arabs, Assyrians, Armenians, Merkits, Maronites and Copts were forced to abandon their lands. Orthodox Christianity is essentially on the verge of extinction in the region; the handful of Christians who have chosen to stay live a life of fear. Christians are the targets of radical groups and oppressive governments. Christians are also among the targets of provocative activities in the region. In the past several years, countless churches were razed down or

bombed in Egypt. These attacks cost the lives of hundreds of Christians. The number of Iraqi Christians, which stood at 1.4 million in 2003, has plummeted to about 300,000 today. Chaldean, Syriac and Nestorian villages have been completely razed, rendering Christians as refugees in their own country.

Without doubt, Syria is the place where the flames of war now burn most intensely. Today, the Syrian Christian community has been caught in the conflict between the regime and separatist groups. Particularly in Homs and Latakia, many churches that were caught in the crossfire were utterly destroyed. The history of Syrian Christians dates back as far as Saint Paul; the pre-civil war population of this 2,000-year-old community was 2,000,000, whereas today it has been reduced to mere hundreds of thousands.

The northern region of Syria is one of the centers of Christian society. The region's demography is predominantly comprised of Kurds, Arabs and Turkmens. With the spread of the civil war, the PYD established a de facto canton in the region: Since the PYD have a desire to found a communist state in Syria, it is exerting pressure on the local Kurdish, Arab and Turkmen populations. The Christian Nestorians in the region are struggling for survival under PYD oppression. Numerous Christian villages have been burned down. The people of the region have been forced to migrate, and whatever possessions they left behind were looted by the PYD terrorist organization and its partisans. The Christians who struggle for their existence in the city of Qamishli have also come under armed attack from the PYD's militants on more than one occasion. Especially since early 2017, a great many Christians in the region have lost their lives in PYD attacks. The PYD has declared Qamishli as the capital of the so-called canton and at the moment, it is trying to take away the right to life of the 50,000 Christians residing in Qamishli.

The Christians in northern Syria try to make their voices heard by the outside world at every opportunity. They tell of how the PYD seizes their possessions, how it levies taxes by force of arms, and how their youth are forced to fight in the PYD's ranks. Johnny Messo, the President of the World Council of Arameans, has consistently spoken out in his interviews about the PYD's policies to seize the region and how the terrorist organization uses the weapons supplied to it by the USA against innocent Christians. Again in the past few days, 18 Armenian and Nestorian organizations issued a joint declaration protesting the oppressive policies the PYD pursues towards Christians. Regrettably, these pleas of the Christians of northern Syria have hardly made any impact in the Western media.

The PYD is being pampered by the coalition forces, particularly the USA. It is being provided with weapons and financial support, while a blind eye is turned towards its aggressive policies. The USA fails to realize that the world is drifting towards a new communist terrorism. The only thing the PYD/PKK has accomplished in their 40-year-long history is to tyrannize any nation that stands on their way, especially their own people. By remaining an ally of these communist

terrorists, the West is knowingly playing with fire. They seem to not understand that terrorist organizations do not make allies or friends. An armed organization becoming an actual state in Syria will ignite the fuse of a new, unabated war and those who will suffer the most from this will be Christians, Muslims, Jews, Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens; in short, the people of the region. The sparks of such a flame may swiftly spread to the entire world. For this reason, the policy of arming terrorist organizations and employing them as mercenaries must come to an end as soon as possible.

Ultimately, the duty that falls on all Muslims is to unite among themselves and unite with the downtrodden Christians and put an end to the oppression in the region targeting both Muslims and Christians alike.

*The writer has authored more than 300 books translated in 73 languages on politics, religion and science.*

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180204012039/http://newsrescue.com/christians-targeted-middle-east-terrorism/#axzz542ZVazW7>

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