

MECHRIC Condemns Ongoing Genocide of Christians - From Middle East to Europe

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WASHINGTON DC - On June 27th, the Christian town of Al Qaa in northeastern Lebanon, a few miles from the Syrian border, was the target of eight suicide bombers. This attack resulted in the killing of at least five people and wounding eleven. The population of Al Qaa consists of an estimated 12,000 Christians from the Melkite (Greek) Catholic Church.

Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria, many have fled to Lebanon. After the attacks, several towns near Al Qaa announced curfews for Syrian refugees out of fear that militants could be hiding among them.

Europe now faces increasing threats from Islamists who disguise themselves as refugees, and await opportunities to carry out terrorist actions.

In order to prevent further growth of terrorism in modern and democratic societies, terrorism has to be fought at its source. If we cannot end terrorism in the Middle East, terrorism will not be beaten. Local moderate forces and local moderate people, such as Middle Eastern Christians, have to be empowered to assist in defeating terrorism. Without multi-ethnic and multi-religious policies, discrimination, persecution and genocidal massacres against religious minorities will continue to plague the region.

On June 30th, a Coptic Priest, Father Paul Halim was killed outside the Church of the Martyr of St. George in Sinai, Egypt. Father Paul Halim was shot dead while returning from prayers.

Since the Arab Spring in 2011, the Coptic Christian community in Egypt has become a target for Islamist groups. From 2011 to-date, and in addition to 70 churches and over 1,000 Christian homes attacked and burnt in August 2013, at least 50 churches have been closed in Egypt due to attacks or threats from Islamists. Copts also suffered the most barbaric killing of 20 Egyptian Copts and the 1 Ghanaian captured with them who were beheaded on a Libyan beach last year by the Islamic State. Attacks by Islamist mobs on Copts, under the complacent watch of the Egyptian authorities, are becoming more routine.

We the undersigned members of Middle East Christian Committee (MECHRIC) are concerned about the plight of Christians in the Middle East. Christians have been deeply troubled by the anarchic crisis caused by the invasion and occupation of Mosul and the Nineveh Plain in Iraq, in addition to the Khabur Valley, Al-Quaryatayn, Saddam and other Christian cities in Syria by the Islamic State (IS).

We call on the International Community, US Administration, European Union and Russian Federation to mount an immediate and decisive response to the need for self-defense and self-administration of Christians in the Middle East.

The current situation in Middle Eastern countries has become tragic for the Christians as they face the risk of extinction in the land which is the cradle of civilization. If the Western World desires that Christians be part of the Middle East community in the future, those powers must act now to save them.

- The World Maronite Union
- Coptic Solidarity International
- American Mesopotamian Organization (AMO)
- American Melkite Committee
- Bethnahrin Patriotic Union Iraq
- Syriac National Council of Syria
- Federation of Syriac Associations in Turkey
- Universal Syriac Union Party Lebanon
- European Syriac Union
- Bethnahrin Women Union
- Suryoyo American Association

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