



## **The West Turns a Blind Eye to Ethnic Cleansing of Iraq's Christians**

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Stockholm -- During the month of Ramadan the terror attacks in Iraq have escalated explosively. The attacks have been more numerous and more brutal. There is a regular civil war going on between different groups. Everything is about gaining power in order to take possession of the country's resources and to strengthen the position of one's own group. The contending parties in the war are Shia-Muslims, Sunni-Muslims and Kurds.

In the middle of the chaos, during the month of Ramadan which is holy for Muslims, there is another war, or to be correct a hunt, going on. The ones that are being hunted are the defenceless Christians.

The latest news reports from Iraq are about abductions, torture and murders on the Christian population. An ethnic cleaning of Christians is perpetrated as we speak. The Christians, who have no protection at all, are being victimized because of their religion, ethnicity or as a reaction against the actions of the Western worlds. In other words the fanatics have many reasons to take the lives of the Christians and to exterminate all Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs from Iraq.

In the light of the above mentioned I want to draw the attention to some events that have claimed many victims among the Christians lately. These events are just the tip of the iceberg of terror attacks. I will begin with the publishing of the Mohammed images and its consequences.

### The first fatalities of the Mohammed images

The Danish news paper Jyllandsposten's publishing of the Mohammed images created an anger among Muslims. This anger was very surprising for us here in the West. The anger and the reactions against the publishing and the way the Danish government handled the issue were shown in many places in the world. But the first victims due to these images were not Danes or other Westerners. Instead it was the Assyrians when their churches were bombed in Iraq. Although the media was informed by journalist Nuri Kino about what the media had caused, it was still indifferent and chose to ignore the consequences.

### Well-planned and well-aimed bomb attack

On October 4th, 2006 a car bomb detonated in a Christian area and killed nine people. Among the killed was Georges Zara, member of the Assyrian Chaldean Syriac National Council. A few days earlier a smaller bomb was detonated in the same area to draw people to the scene. When a lot of people had gathered to help the wounded a larger and more fatal bomb was detonated. This terror attack resulted in many deaths and injured.

### A murder with a message, priest beheaded

Father Paulos Eskandar, of Mor Afrem Syriac Orthodox Church was kidnapped on the 9th of October 2006 by fanatic Muslims. Two days later the Muslims had decapitated the priest. They did this although the Christians fulfilled their demands by posting a text on the church doors that condemned the pope's statement about Islam. After the murder the abductors called the priest's wife and told her: Your husband deserved to die because he refused to convert to Islam. We threw his body in bags so his blood would not soil "the land of Islam". On October 11th the body of the priest and his head were found in different places. These Muslims had cut off his head and his limbs.

Two 14 year old boys are killed, a murder with a high symbolic significance A fourteen year old boy was also murdered in a barbaric manner in Albasra. The boy faced a much crueller death. He was crucified and after that the barbarians stabbed the boy in the stomach, just as it was done to Jesus. The second murder was perpetrated on October 21st in Baquba, when a group of veiled Muslims attacked a workplace where a 14 year old boy named Ayad Tariq worked. The men asked the boy for his identity card. Another employee who had managed to hide witnessed the course of events. After seeing in his identity card that he was Christian the men asked Ayad whether he was a "dirty Christian sinner". Ayad answered: "Yes, I am Christian, but I am not a sinner." The rebels yelled that he was a dirty Christian sinner and continued to grab him and to scream "Allahu, Akbar! Allahu, akbar!" After this Muslim ritual they decapitated him in the most brutal and disgusting way. He was only 14 years!

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This is a clear message from Muslims, that Christians will be cleaned out from Iraq with violence. Similar signals are given both from Kurds and Arabs.

Hush up the already fragile media coverage

The Kurdish militia has at several occasions terrorized Assyrians and their media. Murder, terror, threats and assault have become a part of the staff's normal weekday. Recently a group of the Kurdish militia KDP, Kurdistan Democratic Party, attacked the Assyrian Democratic Movement's (ADM) TV-station, Ashur TV. This is done to try to stop the coverage of the cruel reality that Assyrians live in today in northern Iraq.

Conclusion

When other groups are in warfare for the power, Christians are terrorized, raped, beheaded and crucified for completely different reasons. The Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs, who do not have any strive for power, are struggling for their existence and survival.

To protect the Kurdish population in Iraq the Western world has arranged a free zone in the northern part of the country. Why doesn't the same apply when Assyrians are in the same situation?

In the reactions against the clumsy actions of the West, it has always been the Christian Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs that have paid the price with their lives. Like recently, when the Pope commented Islam and earlier, when Jyllandsposten published the Mohammed images.

The events mentioned above and many more before them aren't just a part of the chaotic situation in Iraq. The symbolic significant and systematic murders, such as the beheading of the priest, the crucifying of the boy and the spreading of DVDs that contains authentic beheading scenes, are directly aimed against the Christian population. These actions aim unambiguously at an ethnic and religious cleaning of the Christians of Iraq. Many refugee reports, among them an unpublished UNHCR report, state clearly that the Christians constitute more than 44% of those who flee Iraq. This also shows clearly that Christians suffer more than Muslims.

There is no doubt that Iraq is being drained of its Christians. The Western countries, which put Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs in this difficult situation because of their own actions have to stop being spectators and instead do something about it. That is why my opinion is that a free zone with the protection of the UN is the obligation of the West towards the Christians in Iraq. Anything else is hypocrisy.

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