



ADF INTERNATIONAL

**31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**  
**Interactive Dialogue with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the**  
**Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/31/68)**

**Item 4**

Mr. President,

ADF International shares the concerns of the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and more specifically, in relation to the fate of Christians, Arameans, Yazidis and other ethnic and religious groups persecuted by the Islamic State (ISIS/Daesh).

ADF International is concerned that at this moment ISIS/Daesh is committing the most atrocious of crimes against humanity and war crimes against religious minorities, amounting to genocide, and no adequate steps are being taken to stop the atrocities from continuing.

Religious minorities have been targeted specifically on the grounds of their actual or perceived religion by ISIS/Daesh with intent to destroy the groups, in whole or in part.

Those minority groups have been victims of mass murder, torture, kidnapping for ransom, sexual enslavement and systematic rape of girls and women. Forcible conversions to Islam, destruction of churches, monasteries, cemeteries, are as well part of a widespread attack on Christians, Arameans, Yazidis and other religious groups.

The persecution of Christians in SAR by ISIS/Daesh is extreme. As a result, the population of Christians dropped from 1.25 million in 2011 to as few as 500,000 today.<sup>1</sup>

Examples include three Christian men who were executed for refusing to convert to Islam<sup>2</sup>, a Catholic priest who was beheaded by the rebels<sup>3</sup>, at least 15 Assyrian Christians who were beheaded or shot<sup>4</sup>, three Christians who were executed<sup>5</sup>, and at least 10 people who were executed by a self-proclaimed “religious court” for being Christian.<sup>6</sup> In February 2015, IS seized 35 Assyrian Christian villages, kidnapping over 300 Christians. ISIS/Daesh released 23 people in March 2015 and demanded £15 million for the release of 230 remaining

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<sup>1</sup> Aid to the Church in Need, Clare Creegan, Christianity is on course to disappear from parts of the Middle East, available at: <http://www.acnuk.org/news.php/599/christianity-is-on-course-to-disappear-from-parts-of-the-middle-east>

<sup>2</sup> Michael Carl, 3 Christians executed after refusing to Convert, available at: <http://www.wnd.com/2013/12/3-christians-executed-after-refusing-to-convert/>

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Goodenough, Reported Beheading of Syrian Priest Boosts Fear for Christians’ Safety, available at: <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/reported-beheading-syrian-priest-boosts-fear-christians-safety>

<sup>4</sup> Inés San Martín, Syrian Sources Say ISIS Executed 15 Christians – With More Killing to Come, available at: <http://www.cruknow.com/faith/2015/02/26/syrian-sources-say-isis-executed-15-more-christians-with-more-killing-to-come/>.

<sup>5</sup> ANSAmed, Syria: ISIS releases execution video of Christian hostages, available at: [http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2015/10/08/syria-isis-releases-execution-video-of-christian-hostages\\_13e82495-c747-4095-9446-d32ecd12b899.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2015/10/08/syria-isis-releases-execution-video-of-christian-hostages_13e82495-c747-4095-9446-d32ecd12b899.html).

<sup>6</sup> Hindustan Times, Syria: Al Qaeda-led Religious Court Executes 10 in Aleppo, available at: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/syria-al-qaeda-led-religious-court-executes-10-in-aleppo/story-yoDR2s5f1rcupBMGfjY9iN.html>.

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people.<sup>7</sup> The remaining villagers, amounting to over 1,200, fled to other villages (Hassake and Qamishli), leaving the 35 villages deserted for months.<sup>8</sup>

The atrocities committed by ISIS/Daesh against religious minorities in SAR amount to genocide under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

ADF International calls upon the Commission to consider the evidence on genocide of Christians and other religious groups by ISIS/Daesh in SAR, urges the relevant UN entities to request an advisory opinion and urges the United Nations Security Council to establish a Commission of Experts on genocide for the Middle East.

ADF International further calls upon the United Nations Security Council and supports the referral of the situation in SAR (as caused by ISIS/Daesh) to the International Criminal Court.

Thank you Mr. President.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.