

**Republican Perspective**  
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**PERSECUTED & FORGOTTEN**

*“The systematic murder of Christians in the Middle East is a horrible atrocity, and all of us should be united against it. Likewise, we should speak with one voice against the persecution of Jews, usually being carried out by the very same jihadist radicals.” Ted Cruz, U.S. Senator (R)*

Yesterday, Christians across the world celebrated the birth of Christ. Christians in Syria, Iraq and Nigeria feared to celebrate. The persecution, dare I say genocide, continues in these countries. The United Nations does little. This past September, the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) presented an appeal to the U.N. Human Rights Council to recognize ISIS's ongoing, rampant persecution of Christians in Iraq and Syria as a “genocide.”

Some forty-eight countries are members of the U.N. Human Rights Council. Included are such human rights champions as Cuba, China, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Venezuela. Why would these countries wish to stop persecution? It is part of their DNA.

This is the seventh time that the ECLJ has presented its case. They have demonstrated that ISIS is committing genocide against Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities. At the request of the ECJJ, the U.N. did appoint a special adviser to lead an investigative team to collect and preserve evidence of the genocide.

On December 9th, the U.N. commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Genocide Convention classifies genocide as an international crime and provides that all member states must prevent and punish genocide, its incitement, and any attempt to commit genocide. Genocide is referred to as “the crime of crimes” because it seeks to wipe out an entire group of people based upon nationality, ethnicity, race or religion. All states are called upon to prevent and punish the perpetrators. Some 150 countries have adopted the Genocide Convention.

The ECLJ wants the adoption of the genocide classification because it allows for aid that is otherwise unavailable for the victims, and it allows the U.N. to take the steps necessary to “fully halt the genocide and fulfill its responsibility to protect the victims.” Christians are returning to their war-savaged towns without electricity, water, or a sense of security.

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) published a report on the Persecution & Forgotten Christians 2015-17. Some of its findings:

- Since 2015 the situation for Christians has worsened dramatically and is more violent now than at any other period in modern time.
- In Aleppo, which was home to Syria's largest Christian population, numbers fell from 150,000 Christians to 35,000 by the spring of 2017, which is a drop of more than 75 percent.
- Christianity in Iraq could be effectively wiped out by 2020 if the population continues to decline as it has in the past two years.
- ISIS and other Islamist militant groups have committed genocide in Syria and Iraq.
- Boko Haram has carried out genocide against Christians in northern Nigeria.
- In China, where the President has described Christianity as "a foreign infiltration", increased hostility to Church communities, accused of resisting government control, has resulted in the widespread removal of crosses from churches and the destruction of church buildings. Some regional authorities have banned Christmas trees and greetings cards.
- In North Korea, "unspeakable atrocities" against Christians include enforced starvation, abortion and reports of the faithful being hung on crosses over a fire and others being crushed under a steamrollers.

The ECLJ's letter to the U.N. Special Adviser listed atrocities committed by Boko Haram in Nigeria. "It is estimated that since May of 2011 Boko Haram has killed more than 37,500 people, displaced 2.4 million, and created 228,000 refugees. Boko Haram has pledged allegiance to ISIS and utilizes its tactics of mass killings and kidnapping to instill fear and to intimidate. They target Christians and anyone else whom they see as a threat to the establishment of an Islamic State," the letter explains.

The Boko Haram has now been joined by the predominately Muslim Fulani herdsman. ECLJ explains, "The Fulani herdsman have begun attacking Christian farmers, destroying homes, churches, and even kidnapping Christian school girls in order to marry them to Muslim men."

Just months ago, the Muslims attacked during mass a Catholic church killing 19. A few days later, 39 Christians were killed and 160 homes burned by Muslims.

For a thousand years, violent conflicts exist between Muslims and Christians. They continue today. Many in the West think the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and Africa can't happen to them. History suggests otherwise.