



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 9, 2019

Global Persecution of Christians Nearing Genocidal Levels, British Report Finds

A study commissioned by the U.K. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has found that the persecution of Christians around the world is nearing near genocidal levels, and political correctness has kept the issue from being addressed.

[The study](#), led by Anglican Bishop Philip Mounstephen, found that approximately one in three individuals suffer from religious persecution, with Christians being the most persecuted religious group in the world.

“Persecution on grounds of religious faith is a global phenomenon that is growing in scale and intensity,” reads the report’s overview. “Though it is impossible to know the exact numbers of people persecuted for their faith, based on reports from different NGOs, it is estimated that one third of the world’s population suffers from religious persecution in some form, with Christians being the most persecuted group.”

The overview goes on to note that evidence suggests “acts of violence and other intimidation against Christians are becoming more widespread,” with concerted efforts by some groups in parts of the Middle East and Africa to “eradicate” the Christian faith in their areas.

The report cites a Pew Research Center study showing that in 2016 Christians were targeted in a total of 144 countries, up from 125 just a year earlier. The Pew study found that “Christians have been harassed in more countries than any other religious group and have suffered harassment in many of the heavily Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa.”

The U.K. report goes on to state that in some regions of the world, “the level and nature of persecution is arguably coming close to meeting the international definition of genocide.... The eradication of Christians and other minorities on pain of ‘the sword’ or other violent means was revealed to be the specific and stated objective of extremist groups in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, north-east Nigeria, and the Philippines.”

That “intent to erase all evidence of the Christian presence,” continued the report, “was made plain by the removal of crosses, the destruction of Church buildings and other Church symbols. The killing and abduction of clergy represented a direct attack on the Church’s structure and leadership. Where these and other incidents meet the tests of genocide, governments will be required to bring perpetrators to justice, aid victims and take preventative measures for the future.”





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The BBC quoted Foreign Secretary Hunt as saying that he thought “political correctness” was, in part, responsible for a lack of response among Western nations to the rising problem of Christian persecution. Harkening back to Britain’s history of global conquest, Hunt observed, “I think there is a misplaced worry that it is somehow colonialist to talk about a religion that was associated with colonial powers rather than the countries that we marched into as colonizers. That has perhaps created an awkwardness in talking about this issue — the role of missionaries was always a controversial one and that has, I think, also led some people to shy away from this topic.” He added that “what we have forgotten in that atmosphere of political correctness is actually the Christians that are being persecuted are some of the poorest people on the planet.”

Juliana Taimoorazy of the Iraqi Christian Relief Council concurred with the notion that political correctness has prompted many to ignore religious persecution, especially of Christians. “I believe the death of most people suffering today is truly because of political correctness,” she said, “because the world turns a blind eye to this, and when we are politically correct, we are sympathizing with those terrorists that are destroying communities and erasing history.”

The U.K. report noted that the Christian population in Palestine is now below 1.5 percent, and in Syria, where ISIS and other Islamic terrorist groups have held sway, the number of Christians has dropped from 1.7 million in 2011 to below 450,000 today. Similarly, in Iraq, the Christian population has fallen from 1.5 million before 2003 (when the second Gulf War began) to fewer than 120,000 today.

“The main impact of such genocidal acts against Christians is exodus,” the report stated. “Christianity now faces the possibility of being wiped out in parts of the Middle East where its roots go back furthest.... Christianity is at risk of disappearing.”

In a [statement](#), Bishop Mounstephen said that through his previous experience with the global church in Asia and Africa, “I was aware of the terrible reality of persecution, but to be honest in preparing this report I’ve been truly shocked by the severity, scale, and scope of the problem. It forces us in the West to ask ourselves some hard questions, not the least of which is this: why have we been so blind to this situation for so long? It is essential we now recognize that religion is a massive vulnerability marker for many communities worldwide. The oft-cited Western mantra that we attend to ‘need not creed’ disguises this fundamental fact. Put simply your creed might put you in much greater need — and we cannot be blind to that.”

He added that it “is also ironic that many western secularists, Islamic extremists, and authoritarian regimes share a common erroneous assumption: that the Christian faith is primarily an expression of white western privilege. In fact, Christianity is primarily a phenomenon of the global south and the global poor.”

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