



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on August 28, 2014

## The Ever Dwindling Iraqi Christian Minority, Thanks to U.S. Foreign Policy

Newspapers and television channels are full of pictures showing Iraq's Yazidis fleeing from the forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Thousands of helpless men, women, and children who have lived for centuries in Iraq's Niniveh province have been uprooted by Islamic militants who demand that the people convert to their brand of Islam or face death.

President Obama has responded by sending war planes to attack the militants and air drops to provide food and water to the refugees. He has also responded to similar attacks aimed at the Kurds living in Northern Iraq. For them, it is military equipment to help them defend themselves. Known as tough fighters, the Kurds have fared well during the turmoil generated by ISIS.



There seems, however, to be little or no concern from the White House and Congress about the Christians who have been targeted continuously by militant Islamists and now by ISIS. In Mosul (also in Nineveh province), where thousands of Catholics have lived and worshiped since biblical times, Catholic Mass is no longer celebrated as it has been for almost two millennia. Priests have been slain and the people have been terrorized. For all the years when Catholics populated the region, they have withstood numerous threats, especially during the years since Mohammed started the Muslim religion in the seventh century. But what has occurred since the U.S. invasion in 2003 has turned out to be their worst nightmare.

ISIS warriors have demanded conversion to Islam or death. When a 45-year-old Catholic retired army officer living in Mosul was told by ISIS marauders that he had to leave his home and business immediately or face death for not converting to Islam, he gathered his family and fled. So have most other Catholics. But there has been no outcry from President Obama about the Christian victims of ISIS. There were once 1.5 million Christians (mostly Catholics) living throughout Iraq. Ever since the U.S. invasion in 2003, they have been attacked ruthlessly by various branches of Islam. But, while concern is raised about the current plight of Yazidis and Kurds, the fate of remaining Christians has been ignored.

The Yazidis are a Kurdish-speaking minority who number 200,000 worldwide. The Kurds are a breakaway sect from Islam which means that their ancestry does not reach back as far as does that of the first Iraqi Christians. Most of the 30 million Kurds worldwide live in northern Iraq and parts of neighboring Iran, Syria, and Turkey. They have long sought to become an independent country that they would call Kurdistan. The Christians who have fled will most likely never return. Those who



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haven't fled face almost incomprehensible threats.

The devastation visited upon Yazidis, Kurds, and Christians is a consequence of the U.S. invasion, an attack on a country that supposedly possessed weapons of mass destruction and wouldn't hesitate to use them. But the claim that they had such weapons was a lie. The devastation wreaked on Iraq by the invaders contributed to unleashing militant Islamists including the latest threat posed by ISIS. And recall that the [Obama administration helped supply ISIS](#) in Syria, but now fights them in Iraq. If peace is indeed possible in this region, the United States should follow a totally new course: vacate the area, cease policing the world, terminate the Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz goal to build an American empire, and begin minding only the business of America.

*John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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