



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on December 20, 2013

World Turns Away as Rebel Massacres of Syrian Christians Intensify

The world media is increasingly losing interest in the foreign-fueled war still raging in Syria between the Assad regime and an assortment of Islamist rebel groups backed by the Obama administration, Sunni Arab dictators, and European powers. For embattled Syrian Christians, though — most of whom tried to stay out of the conflict — reports suggest the situation is deteriorating quickly, with over 1,200 documented murders so far, and almost 500,000 forced to flee their homes to escape the escalating violence and ruthless persecution. The real numbers are probably even worse.



Experts say the end goal of many jihadist rebel groups is to eradicate Christianity in Syria as part of the effort to create a fundamentalist Islamic state. Even factions of the Obama-backed "[Free Syrian Army](#)," receiving vast amounts of Western aid under the guise of supporting supposed "moderates," have been implicated in the anti-Christian atrocities by refugees cited in [media reports](#). Like in Iraq [following the U.S. government's "regime change" operation](#), the Christian minority in Syria — about 10 percent of the population — could face potential extinction as Western powers continue to shower arms and support on Islamic rebels.

In recent months, ghastly accounts of civilian massacres aimed at Syrian Christian communities in particular have become more frequent and more gruesome. However, despite the apparent surge in anti-Christian savagery often perpetrated by Western-backed jihadist rebels, the establishment press has largely turned away. As *The New American* has been [reporting](#) for [years](#), the prospect of full-blown genocide against Syrian Christians if and when Assad falls is very real — and growing more likely with each passing month.

Indeed, what analysts and church leaders are describing as among the worst attacks thus far occurred in late October — the execution of dozens of civilian followers of Christ, including women and children, in the ancient town of Saddad. The massacre went virtually unnoticed by the outside world. According to the reports that have emerged thus far, at least 45 Christians were killed — some tortured to death — and the town's 14 churches were largely destroyed.

"What happened in Saddad is the most serious and biggest massacre of Christians in Syria in the past two years and a half," [reported](#) Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Alnemeh, the Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Homs and Hama, saying 45 innocent civilians, including women and children, had been martyred. Many were thrown into mass graves or wells. "Other civilians were threatened and terrorized," he said. "Thirty were wounded and ten are still missing."

According to the church leader, whose [statement](#) has been widely quoted by Christian sources and alternative media outlets, some 1,500 Christian families were held hostage by rebel forces and used as



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human shields. All of the houses in the ancient Christian village of about 15,000 people were looted, he said. The churches were desecrated and robbed, with ancient texts being taken. Businesses, schools, the hospital, the post office, and other buildings were all destroyed as well.

Photographs of the destruction were [posted online](#). [Videos](#) of the anti-Christian terror and [its aftermath](#) appeared on YouTube. So far, however, the establishment press — especially in the United States, where the Obama administration has emerged as one of the top backers of rebel forces — has remained almost entirely silent about the escalating atrocities against embattled Christian communities in Syria.

The brutal rampage in Soddad featured what is being described as the worst known massacre of Christians in Syria in recent times; and the second worst in the Middle East after the savage 2010 attack against Iraq's Church of Our Lady of Salvation, the Archbishop said. "We ask if the terrorists are gone permanently, or if there is the possibility of a return for a second massacre," he added in a [statement](#) posted by the Orthodox Church, noting that thousands of Christians were held hostage, yet the world refused to listen.

"We cried out to the world, and no-one heard us, except for the minority which came to our aid, and stood in solidarity with us," the Archbishop continued in the statement, pointing out that hundreds of Christians who had taken refuge in the town after fleeing from jihadist violence in other areas were again victimized. "Where is the Christian conscience? Where, the Syriac conscience? Where is the human conscience? Where are my brothers, the metropolitans, priests, and friends?"

"Where... where? And no-one answers... except for a few," the distraught Syriac Orthodox leader said. "There is a lump in the throat and burning in the heart for all that's happened in my metropolitanate and its poor suffering people which no sooner did it flee to a place of refuge, then left from there empty-handed, and after all this, to where, I don't know." Many of the Christians being persecuted in Syria [previously fled atrocities in Iraq](#) unleashed after the U.S. government invasion.

In perhaps the most widely published account of the Islamist atrocities in Soddad, analyst Raymond Ibrahim, author of *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians*, [pointed out](#) that "the U.S. government and its 'mainstream media' mouthpiece are, as usual, silent" about the massacre. Incredibly, the silence from the establishment press persists months later, despite the fact that much of the horror was captured on video by the "Allahu Akbar"-shrieking rebels and posted online.

The Obama administration-backed opposition forces that perpetrated the gruesome slaughter in Soddad, Ibrahim and other sources reported, invaded and occupied the town until being ousted by government troops after about a week. "While the archbishop is correct that this is the 'largest massacre of Christians in Syria,'" continued Ibrahim, "it is but the tip of the iceberg of the persecution the nation's Christian minority has suffered — including beheadings, church bombings, kidnappings, rapes, and dislocation of hundreds of thousands of Christians — since the war broke out."

One lawmaker in Syria quoted in Middle Eastern news reports explained the end goal of the jihadist violence. "The radical organizations are now attacking [Christian] children to get their parents to leave the country," [said](#) Maria Saada, a Christian member of the Syrian parliament. "In the last few days, five Christian schools have been attacked where children have been killed."

As *The New American* has been reporting almost since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, the jihadist attacks against Christians and other minorities are hardly an isolated phenomenon. In September, for example, Islamist rebels invaded another ancient Christian town, Maaloula — among the last places on Earth where the Aramaic, the language of Christ, was still spoken. Christians there were [terrorized](#).



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[kidnapped, raped, and martyred](#) as their churches and leaders were attacked.

However, despite efforts to drive Christians out of Syria, Iraq, and other Islamic-dominated areas — a region encompassing the birthplace of Christianity — some church leaders plan to stay no matter what. “We are determined to remain in this blessed land even at the cost of martyrdom and martyrdom of blood,” Melkite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East Gregory III Laham [told](#) the Fides Agency, asking for prayers and support from Christians. “We wish to stay in this blessed land, cradle of Christianity.”

The plight of Middle Eastern Christians has received some recent publicity after Prince Charles [drew attention](#) to the issue. However, for the most part, persecuted Christian communities around the world are suffering as the Western world remains largely ignorant — primarily due to an establishment media that refuses to report the facts. Also deeply troubling to many analysts, as *The New American* [documented last year](#), is the crucial role U.S. government interventionism in the region has played in facilitating the persecution. Christians from across the Middle East are requesting prayer.

Photo of Syrian Christians: AP Images

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