

# CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION SPIKES

All across the nation, students are learning about genocide committed in the twentieth century, yet most know next to nothing about genocide taking place right now. That's partly because the victims are Christians: many academics and journalists have become accustomed to seeing Christians as victimizers, not victims, thus leaving them unmoved when reports surface about genocide against the faithful.

"Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians Oppressed for their Faith, 2015-17," is a study released by Aid to the Church in Need, an organization chaired by George J. Marlin. Its findings are devastating.

"In 12 of the 13 countries reviewed," the report notes, "the situation for Christians was worse in overall terms in the period 2015-17 than within the preceding two years." Genocide has been recorded in Syria, Iraq, and northern Nigeria, either by ISIS or affiliates such as Boko Haram.

North Korea is singled out for persecuting Christians. Its atrocities include starvation, abortion, and hanging Christians on crosses over a fire; others were run over by steamrollers.

As usual, Muslim madmen go about killing converts in public, and they do so with impunity. This is in line with the stated goal of Islamists, namely, the "eradication of Christians, and other minorities." In Sudan, the killing is orchestrated by the government.

One of the report's most salient findings, which deserves greater attention, is something that Catholics, and indeed all Christians, need to confront. "The defeat of Daesh [ISIS] and other Islamists in major strongholds of the Middle East offers the last hope of recovery for Christian groups threatened with extinction."

Notice that the report did not say that more dialogue is needed: it said ISIS must be crushed. That is a glum, yet realistic, conclusion; it is certainly supported by the evidence.

Now that ISIS is on the run throughout the Middle East, the time to finish the job is more important than ever before. As the report says, "Many [Christians] would not survive another similar violent attack."

This report deserves a wide audience.