

# Nasara

**The Expulsion of Christians from Nineveh**

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# Introduction:

Mosul is Iraq's second largest city, the site of Biblical Nineveh where Jonah and Nahum preached, and where later, according to local tradition, Jesus' Apostles Thomas and Judas (Thaddeus) brought the Aramaic language of Jesus and His teachings. They had many converts in the area. The church there preserved the language of Jesus into modern times.

The ancient Assyrian villages near water sources in the surrounding arid lands also had many Christian converts by the second century despite the continued strong presence of Assyrian, Greek, and Zoroastrian religions. Most of the Assyrian temples were converted to Christian worship places. Early Christians there faced great persecution and many were killed for their faith, including Barbara, the daughter of the pagan governor of Karamles. One of the hills beside the city is named after her. Through the centuries priests came from various religious orders and divided Christians into several sects, some loyal to the Catholic tradition, others adhering to Eastern leadership.

Mohammad began preaching Islam around 610 A.D., facing violent opposition to his teachings for twenty years from tribes in the area of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Even so, his movement grew in numbers and strength. In December 629, he gathered an army of 10,000 Muslim converts and invaded Mecca. The attack went largely uncontested and Muhammad seized the city (Sahih-Bukhari, Book 43, #658). His followers, increasingly radicalized, went on to invade other cities throughout Iraq and all the way to Europe, Africa, and Asia, giving the option of conversion or death.

Where they couldn't conquer by invasion, they sent Muslim people to live, creating a network with followers in every nation. These networks were used by al-Qaeda in the modern era to support bombers who were sent to kill as many Christians as possible in high profile attacks.

The Islamic State (Daesh), a radical Sunni Muslim religious-military entity, arose as a beast from the failed states of Iraq and Syria in 2014 offering a new brand of murder and mayhem that made al-Qaida seem limp in comparison. At first Daesh seemed just a new name on an old face to Christians who had been persecuted by Sunni Muslims in Mosul and its environs all their lives. By the time that the viciousness of Daesh became better known to Mosul Christians, and the group eventually entered Mosul in 2014, it was almost too late for Christians to escape.

Christians had been leaving Mosul steadily over the preceding decades under constant persecution from Sunni Muslims, a slow exodus of tens of thousands of people. Most had been dispersed throughout the world. Those who remained in Iraq were waiting it out in other Christian villages and Christian districts of several major Muslim cities in Iraq, many of them holding on to devalued properties in Mosul hoping their fortunes would rise again there. If they sold out their houses and businesses, the Sunni Muslims would assure that they got bottom dollar for them, so they were just holding on nearby, hoping to sell for enough money to get out of Iraq.

When Daesh, a Sunni Muslim group, invaded Mosul on June 4th, 2014, it faced little opposition. Sunnis in Mosul either fled or quickly joined their cause. First Daesh hid its intentions to subjugate the Christians, passing out propaganda telling how Muslims loved Jesus while moving against the Shia police and army, which took a full week. Then it called the Christian leaders to submit to Muslim authority and pay a tax,

but few attended their meeting. Their response was brutal, and probably what they intended from the start: All Christians were given 24 hours to leave the city, leaving all their wealth behind, or face the “sword.”

The last few thousand Christians evacuated the city en masse, but for a few dozen. Those who stayed after the deadline were systematically approached in their homes and told to convert or leave immediately, and some were raped or killed. Some who had businesses and homes they were not willing to leave pretended to convert to the Muslim religion, going through a short ceremony in the Mosque. Of these, some immediately afterward escaped by use of their newly acquired “free travel” pass. Only a handful remained pretending to practice Islam, attending the mosques, the women wearing the burqa, a gown that covered them from head to toe.

Those who left early flew to the safety of the Kurdistan Region and settled in rented houses. Those who left late were forced to huddle in the corners of churches, rooftops, parks, camps, or anywhere else they could find shelter and food, as there was no more housing available and many were robbed of all their wealth as they left. Some went to nearby Christian villages and towns but were again pushed out when Daesh invaded them, and had to move further away to safety. Daesh attacked them in these cities as well, taking some, but was driven off in others by the Kurds with air support and logistical advice from the U.S. and its allies. Daesh then started robbing all the banks, also confiscating all Christian homes and businesses.

Using local Muslims as informants, Daesh systematically located and marked every Christian-owned home or business they could find with the Arabic letter N, for Nasrah, the term Mohammad used in the Quran to represent Christians. This was accompanied by Arabic words conveying “property of the Islamic State.” An ancient monastery was changed to a Mosque, others were demolished, and church buildings were changed to Daesh command centers, bomb-making factories, prisons, armories, Islamic courts and car washes. This signaled the end of Christianity in Mosul and some nearby villages in that era.

In this book, the story is told in the voices of more than a hundred Christians who suffered this great persecution, laid on the backdrop of recently recorded history. What emerges from their personal testimony is something very different from the historical accounts and news stories of that time. A web of causative factors can be seen in what coalesced into a perfect storm of persecution. These factors were all foreseeable and preventable.

# Chapter 1: The Rise of Persecution

The history of Daesh goes back to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a militant Palestinian Islamist from Jordan with an intense hatred of Israel. He had been raised in a poor mining town north of Amman and was a petty criminal as a youth. He had fought Russians in Afghanistan in the 1980s, working with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda. Zarqawi returned home to Jordan and tried to overthrow the Jordanian government.



Ahmad Fadeel al-Nazal al-Khalayleh (Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, which means father of Musab from Zarqa Village), Unknown source

In October 1998, the Iraq Liberation Act was passed in the U.S., and removing the Hussein regime became the government's plan. One month after the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act, the U.S. and UK launched Operation Desert Fox, an aerial bombardment campaign in Iraq.

In 1998, explosives were found in Zarqawi's home in Jordan, and he was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned. He spread radical views against Jordan, Israel, and the U.S. in prison, and controlled other prisoners for his purposes. A general amnesty in Jordan saw Zarqawi's release in 1999.

In **January 2000**, Zarqawi was sought by the Jordanian government for trying to blow up the Radisson Hotel in Amman before New Year's Day 2000. He fled to Pakistan, but was deported to Afghanistan, where he affiliated with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda, receiving \$200,000 in startup funds from bin Laden, and started a training camp in Afghanistan for targeting American soldiers with chemical weapons. He was wounded by U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, and sought medical treatment in Baghdad, then moved to Syria to begin training fighters to resist the Americans.



Osama bin Laden/ <http://media2.s-nbcnews.com/i/MSNBC/Components/Photo/new/g-us-130708-osama-bin-laden-210p.jpg>

With the start of George W. Bush's presidency in **January 2001**, the U.S. moved to a more aggressive policy in Iraq. The Republican Party called for "full implementation" of the Iraq Liberation Act.



George W. Bush/ [http://www.wupr.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/US\\_NEWS\\_INAUGURATION\\_45\\_ABA.jpg](http://www.wupr.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/US_NEWS_INAUGURATION_45_ABA.jpg)

Zarqawi's group continued to receive funding from Osama bin Laden and pursued common goals with a high degree of autonomy (Grisly path to power In Iraq's insurgency: Zarqawi emerges as al Qaeda rival, ally," Craig Whitlock The Washington Post, September 27, 2004.) Although al-Qaeda funded his training camp, he ran it independently, and used it as a base to plot the overthrow of the Jordanian monarchy and

attacks on Israel, while bin Laden was planning the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. (Death could shake al-Qaeda in Iraq and around the world, Craig Whitlock, The Washington Post, June 10, 2006.) Bin-Laden doubted al-Zarqawi's allegiance to him, as it became increasingly clear that Zarqawi had his own agenda, and felt bin-Laden was not aggressive enough on the world stage. (*The short, violent life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi*, Mary Ann Weaver, Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2006.)

On **September 11, 2001**, several airplanes were high-jacked in the US and sent to crash into U.S. landmarks, including the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York. This both emboldened Muslim terrorists throughout the world and hardened U.S. resolve to strike against terrorism in the Middle East.



World Trade Center Bombing/ <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/HssFfs2Xa3k/maxresdefault.jpg>

When the United States launched its air war inside Afghanistan, on **October 7, 2001**, al-Zarqawi joined forces with al-Qaeda and the Taliban to fight in and around Herat and Kandahar. When Zarqawi finally took the oath of allegiance to bin-Laden in October 2004. (*The short, violent life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi*, Mary Ann Weaver, Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2006.)

The CIA sent the first U.S. fighters to Iraq **in July 2002** to join with the Kurds in fighting the al-Qaeda-linked group Ansar al-Islam. (*Plan of Attack*, Bob Woodward, Simon and Schuster, 2004.)

In **October 2002**, the U.S. Congress authorized the use of U.S. armed forces against Iraq, authorizing President Bush to use "any means necessary" against Iraq. The U.S. was faced with a dilemma, approving military action in Iraq, while realizing the war would increase terrorism against the U.S. (Poll: Talk first,

fight later, staff writer, CBS.com, January 24, 2003.) Testimony to the Congress in their deliberations, from the Defense Department, described al-Zarqawi's importance as a target. (Case Closed, Stephen F. Hayes, The Weekly Standard, November 24, 2003).

Sensitive reporting indicates senior terrorist planner and close al Qaeda associate al Zarqawi has had an operational alliance with Iraqi officials. As of **October 2002**, al Zarqawi maintained contacts with the IIS to procure weapons and explosives, including surface-to-air missiles from an IIS officer in Baghdad. According to sensitive reporting, al Zarqawi was setting up sleeper cells in Baghdad to be activated in case of a U.S. occupation of the city, suggesting his operational cooperation with the Iraqis may have deepened in recent months. Such cooperation could include IIS provision of a secure operating bases [sic] and steady access to arms and explosives in preparation for a possible U.S. invasion. Al Zarqawi's procurements from the Iraqis also could support al Qaeda operations against the U.S. or its allies elsewhere.

On **October 28, 2002** al-Zarqawi's group shot and killed Laurence Foley, Director of U.S.A.I.D. in Amman, Jordan. The U.S. tracked his movements and sought his extradition from every Middle-eastern country where he was seen, without avail. Secretary of State Colin Powell described the importance of Zarqawi as a target to the U.N. Security Council on February 5, 2003: (U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the U.N. Security Council. The White House. February 5, 2003.)

Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants. When our coalition ousted the Taliban, the Zarqawi network helped establish another poison and explosive training center camp. And this camp is located in northeastern Iraq. He traveled to Baghdad in May 2002 for medical treatment, staying in the capital of Iraq for two months while he recuperated to fight another day. During this stay, nearly two dozen extremists converged on Baghdad and established a base of operations there. These Al Qaeda affiliates, based in Baghdad, now coordinate the movement of people, money and supplies into and throughout Iraq for his network, and they've now been operating freely in the capital for more than eight months. We asked a friendly security service to approach Baghdad about extraditing Zarqawi and providing information about him and his close associates. This service contacted Iraqi officials twice, and we passed details that should have made it easy to find Zarqawi. The network remains in Baghdad.

In early 2003, Zarqawi returned to Iraq, where he met with bin Laden's military chief, Saif al-Adel (Muhammad Ibrahim Makawi). They coordinated the flow of experienced al-Qaeda operatives into Iraq through Syria that would begin that fall. (abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A biographical sketch, Gary Gambill, The Jamestown Foundation, December 16, 2004.) (Total war: Inside the new Al-Qaeda, Staff Writer, Middle East Online, March 3, 2006). These fighters did not report directly to Zarqawi, but relied upon him and his network in Iraq. (abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A biographical sketch, Gary Gambill, The Jamestown Foundation, December 16, 2004.) Zarqawi came to be recognized as the regional "emir" of Islamist terrorists in Iraq. (abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A biographical sketch, Gary Gambill, The Jamestown Foundation, December 16, 2004.)

March 18, 2003 marked the beginning of the bombing of Iraq by the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Poland, Spain, Italy and Denmark. The Presidential Palace in Baghdad was hit two days later, and on the third day, coalition ground forces entered Iraq near Basra from Kuwait. Soldiers parachuted

into Kirkuk on March 26 to join Kurdish fighters against the Iraqi army in the North. Baghdad was occupied on April 9, 2003, Kirkuk the next day, and Tikrit on April 15th. By April 30, 466,985 U.S. personnel were in Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. On May 1st major combat operations ended and the military occupation period began. (Iraq: Summary of U.S. Forces, Linwood B. Carter, November 28, 2005. By some estimates over a million Iraqis would die in the war. A Dossier of Civilian Casualties in Iraq, 2003–2005, Staff Writer, Iraq Body Count, July 19, 2005). 24,865 civilians were reported killed in the first two years. Almost 20% of all civilian deaths were women and children.

On August 19, 2003, Zarqawi's group bombed the U.N. headquarters in Iraq, killing twenty-two people, including the United Nations secretary general's special Iraqi envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. Foreign Terrorist Organization: Designation of Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad and Aliases, Staff Writer (Press release). U.S. Department of State, August 19, 2003.

Saddam Hussein was captured by American forces at a farmhouse near Tikrit in a hole in the ground on December 13, 2003. The U.S. hoped removing him and his Sunni Minority from power in Iraq would give democracy a chance in the Middle East. The Shia majority government the U.S. installed in his place, however, squandered that chance by moving to further marginalize Sunni Muslims throughout the region. The Shias systematically oppressed Sunni cities like Mosul in Iraq's north, posting Shia overlords to rule them locally, enforced by Shia army and police forces from the south of Iraq.



Saddam Hussein/ <http://www.alrasheednet.com/news/10919?language=arabic>

In 2004, with the U.S. objectives reached, the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Army took over control of most of Iraq. The result was that Iraq fell into chaos and anarchy. Zarqawi saw tremendous opportunities in this weak situation in Iraq and began to exploit them, moving his base of operations to northern Iraq. (*Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on Postwar Findings About Iraq's WMD Programs and Links to Terrorism and How They Compare with Prewar Assessments. 109th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Report on Pre-war Intelligence on Iraq, September 8, 2006.*)

British Prime Minister Tony Blair later admitted that, as Americans had feared going into the war, the invasion helped promote the rise of ISIS/Daesh. (Tony Blair apologizes for 'mistakes' over Iraq War and



admits 'elements of truth' to view that invasion helped rise of Isis, Richard Osley, The Independent, October 25, 2015)

Zarqawi needed financial and logistical support for his plans. U.S. intelligence intercepted a **January 2004** letter from Zarqawi to al Qaeda in which he made his offer to bin-Laden: (Zarqawi is said to swear allegiance to bin Laden, Walter Pincus, The Washington Post, October 19, 2004.) (Letter from Zarqawi to bin Laden, CPA-Iraq.org, January 2004)

You, gracious brothers, are the leaders, guides, and symbolic figures of jihad and battle. We do not see ourselves as fit to challenge you, and we have never striven to achieve glory for ourselves. All that we hope is that we will be the spearhead, the enabling vanguard, and the bridge on which the Islamic nation crosses over to the victory that is promised and the tomorrow to which we aspire. This is our vision, and we have explained it. This is our path, and we have made it clear. If you agree with us on it, if you adopt it as a program and road, and if you are convinced of the idea of fighting the sects of apostasy, we will be your readied soldiers, working under your banner, complying with your orders, and indeed swearing fealty to you publicly and in the news media, vexing the infidels and gladdening those who preach the oneness of Allah. On that day, the believers will rejoice in Allah's victory. If things appear otherwise to you, we are brothers, and the disagreement will not spoil our friendship. This is a cause in which we are cooperating for the good and supporting jihad. Awaiting your response, may Allah preserve you as keys to good and reserves for Islam and its people.

Agreement between the men was negotiated over the subsequent eight months. (Daesh vs Daesh vs Isil vs Islamic State: What do the different names mean and why are there so many? Samuel Osbourne, The Independent, December 3, 2015).



Rather than attacking the U.S. forces head on, the terrorists used an indirect strategy, hitting the U.S. through its proxies, particularly those least guarded, like journalists who ventured into or near their territory. In **May 2004**, Zarqawi's beheading of American Nicholas Berg appeared on a broadcasted video. The video opens with the title "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi slaughters an American".

Jordan sentenced nine men, including al-Zarqawi, to death for their involvement in the plot to attack the NATO summit in Turkey on **June 28 and 29, 2004**. Zarqawi was convicted of planning the entire attack from his post in Iraq, funding the operation with nearly \$120,000, and sending a group of Jordanians into

Jordan to execute the plan. Zarqawi was working to destabilize the entire region with attacks in Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq. (Sixteen held as police “foil plot aimed at NATO summit,” Gareth Jones, The Scotsman (Edinburgh), May 4, 2004).

The Christians in Mosul and the Nineveh Province villages dominated by Sunnis became one of their primary targets, knowing that they would have the support of the Sunni population on the ground in those areas, and that the U.S. would take great offense at the targeting of Christians in Iraq. **On June 26, 2004**, two unidentified men in a car threw a hand grenade into the Church of the Holy Spirit (al-Rooh al-Qudos). The explosion injured the sister of a priest. The church is located in the Bakir neighborhood of the Akha' quarter in Mosul was built in the shape of an ark.



<http://wikimapia.org/1953141/ar/%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9>

On **August 1, 2004** a series of explosions targeted Churches in Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk leaving 15 dead and 71 injured. (At least 15 killed in Iraq church blasts, Reuters, Sydney Morning Herald, August 3, 2004.) St. Paul's Church, located in the Majmooaa/al-Thaqafiya District in Central Mosul, was bombed that day. Aseel Ameer Ablahad was attending Mar Kulos church in Mosul with her family when it was bombed in 2004. Her head was injured in the blast, but she survived. Terrorists had explosives and a rocket in the car when the car bomb was remotely detonated.

In October 2004, Zarqawi swore his network's allegiance to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. An intercepted message stated: (Zarqawi's Pledge of Allegiance to Al-Qaeda: from Mu'asker Al-Battar, Issue 21. The Jamestown Foundation, December 16, 2004)

Numerous messages were passed between 'Abu Musab' (Allah protect him) and the al-Qaeda brotherhood over the past eight months, establishing a dialogue between them. No sooner had the calls been cut off than Allah chose to restore them, and our most generous brothers in al-Qaeda came to understand the strategy of the Tawhid wal-Jihad organization in Iraq, the

land of the two rivers and of the Caliphs, and their hearts warmed to its methods and overall mission. Let it be known that al-Tawhid wal-Jihad pledges both its leaders and its soldiers to the mujahid commander, Sheikh 'Osama bin Laden' (in word and in deed) and to jihad for the sake of Allah until there is no more discord [among the ranks of Islam] and all of the religion turns toward Allah... By Allah, O sheikh of the mujahideen, if you bid us plunge into the ocean, we would follow you. If you ordered it so, we would obey. If you forbade us something, we would abide by your wishes. For what a fine commander you are to the armies of Islam, against the inveterate infidels and apostates!

Zarqawi's group was renamed "al-Qaeda in Iraq." This strengthened relationship between bin-Laden and Zarqawi immediately resulted in some of the biggest atrocities in Iraq in that period. (The Death of Zarqawi: A Major Victory in the War on Terrorism, Staff Writer, The Heritage Foundation, June 8, 2006). Zarqawi had been implicated in over 700 killings in Iraq during the invasion, mostly from bombings, but after this agreement with bin-Laden the number rose to the thousands. (Zarqawi attacked in Iraq Raid, Staff Writer, BBC News. June 6, 2006).

In **October 2004**, Ansar al-Sunna, an al-Qaeda-linked outgrowth of Ansar al-Islam, released a video showing their beheading of a Turkish truck driver on its website. Beheading was a stylized form of violence popularized by Zarqawi to produce terror. It was not common to Al Qaeda outside Iraq, which preferred impersonal bombings in densely populated areas, but was the unique signature of Zarqawi. He declared afterward that he was the "Emir of the land of the two rivers" and cultivated a following of disaffected Sunni Muslims in Syrian and Iraq between Raqqa and Mosul. He boldly declared: "In the Name of Allah, I will not leave Iraq until victory or martyrdom!" He preached the overthrow of the Jordanian government, Israel, and the U.S. government, which became cornerstones of the plans of his followers, and affiliated with the Mujahedeen Sharia Council in Iraq, which also affiliated with bin Laden.

**On December 7, 2004**, The fourth-century Church of the Immaculate Virgin (Our Lady of Purity; al-Gahera/al-Tahra/al-Tahira/al-Tahra al-Fawqaniyya) was bombed at about 2:30 p.m. Ten armed men stormed the church, planted explosives throughout it, and set the bombs off, wounding three people and destroying most of it. Many people were injured.

([http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi\\_christians\\_fear\\_more\\_attacks\\_after\\_two\\_church\\_bombings\\_in\\_mosul/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi_christians_fear_more_attacks_after_two_church_bombings_in_mosul/) Accessed May 20, 2016) The New Armenian Church (Kanesa al-Arman), located in the Wahda neighborhood, in western Mosul, was also bombed the same day but was not completely destroyed.



<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=526324.0>

On December 27, 2004, an audiotape of bin Laden was broadcast, calling Zarqawi "the prince of al Qaeda in Iraq" and asked "all our organization brethren to listen to him and obey him in his good deeds." (Purported bin Laden tape endorses al-Zarqawi, Staff Writer, CNN, December 27, 2004)

In a January 2005 internet recording, Zarqawi condemned democracy as "the big American lie" and labelled participants in Iraq's January 30 election as "enemies of Islam." In a bold statement against democracy, Zarqawi stated "We have declared a bitter war against democracy and all those who seek to enact it... Democracy is also based on the right to choose your religion [and that is] against the rule of Allah." Purported al-Zarqawi tape: Democracy a lie, Staff Writer, CNN, January 23, 2005). In that same month, President Bush reported that bin Laden had assigned Zarqawi to organize a cell inside Iraq that would be used to plan and carry out attacks against the U.S. (Bush declassifies selected Al Qaeda intelligence reports, Mark Silva, Chicago Tribune, May 23, 2007).

In September 2005, the Iraqi government's Shia forces attacked his militants in Tel Afar. As a result, Zarqawi declared war on Americans and Shias everywhere in Iraq. He sent out suicide bombers to American and Shia Iraqi military posts. In revenge, the U.S. bombed his safe house in Baqubah on June 7, 2006, killing Zarqawi, one or more of his wives, one of his sons, and some of his associates. But his style of killing and use of the internet in brief video segments of beheadings, particularly of westerners, was adopted by his followers and continued in the area between Mosul and Raqqa. Osama bin Laden bristled at his rapid growth in power, his independent decision-making, and the media attention he received, so the relations between them became strained.

His actions in Iraq had turned from an insurgency against U.S. troops in Iraq to a Sunni-Shia civil war. (The Mystery of ISIS, Anonymous, New York Review of Books (13), August 13, 2015). He was the founder of the group that became ISIS. (Book Review. "Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS" by Joby Warrick, Thanassis Cambanis, Boston Globe, October 3, 2015). He expanded the already broad "parameters of violence" in Iraq and the Middle East, and from there throughout the world. Even Al Qaeda thought he was going too far, but his methods drew more media attention than al-Qaeda's methods, long after his death. (Book Review. "Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS" by Joby Warrick, Thanassis Cambanis, Boston Globe, October 3, 2015).

On April 25, 2006, a video appeared in which Zarqawi taunted the U.S.: (Zarqawi' shows face in new video, Staff Writer, BBC News, April 25, 2006)

Your mujahideen sons were able to confront the most ferocious of crusader campaigns on a Muslim state...Why don't you tell people that your soldiers are committing suicide, taking drugs and hallucination pills to help them sleep?...By Allah," your dreams will be defeated by our blood and by our bodies. What is coming is even worse.

On July 4, 2006, the U.S. ambassador to Baghdad Zalmay Khalilzad said: "In terms of the level of violence, it (the death of al-Zarqawi) has not had any impact at this point... the level of violence is still quite high." (Zarqawi death has "little impact," BBC News. July 4, 2006).

Terrorists bombed part of the outer wall of the eighth century Church of the Immaculate Virgin, called the "Clock Church" in 2006, at the corner of Nineveh Street and Al Shaziani Street in the Maidan Neighborhood, Mosul. (Islamic State destroys Mosul's historic Christian Clock Church, Andrew V. Pestano, UPI, April 26, 2016) (Islamic State Demolishes Iconic 'Clock Church' in Mosul, Thomas D. Williams, Breitbart, April 26, 2016) (IS Blows up Ancient 'Clock Church' in Mosul, Staff Writer, Bass News, April 26, 2016) (Archbishop of Mosul: reports of destruction of Church of the Immaculate Virgin untrue, Joseph Mahmoud, AsiaNews.it, July 2, 2015).

The Church of the Holy Spirit (al-Rooh al-Qudos), located in the Bakir neighborhood of the Akha' quarter in Mosul, that had been hit by a hand grenade attack on June 26, 2004, was hit by a rocket on September 27, 2006. Then on October 4, 2006, a group of men opened fire on the church, spraying the church with bullets.

Faiza Khuder Fowzi (57) left with her son and his family from Mosul December 24, 2006. She was widowed, and a member of Mar Afram Church. She went to Qaraqush and rented a house for four years, then went to Karamles and built a house, staying there for two years. She left her home in Karamles, again with her son and his family, the day Daesh invaded. Rockets were falling near their house from Daesh, so they left suddenly. They went to stay with her daughter in Dohuk, then rented a second level apartment, and later changed to a first floor apartment, as she had difficulty walking up the stairs. After 19 months, the camp in Seje Village opened, in March 2016, they were given a caravan (number 30).

The execution of Saddam Hussein took place on December 30, 2006.

On April 23, 2007, a coordinated attack occurred in Teleskof. A car bomb detonated, killing the suicide bomber and 25 Yezidis and Assyrian Christians. The attack was claimed by Ansar Al-Sunna, Zarqawi's fighters.

In **May 2007**, Mazen Eshoa, a parish priest at al Beshara Church, was accosted in his home, his father and brother were killed, his sisters were raped, and he was kidnapped with another priest. They were later released after a ransom was paid.

Gunmen shot dead a priest and three deacons in **June 2007**. Ragheed Aziz Ganni and subdeacons Basman Yousef Daud, Wahid Hanna Isho, and Gassan Isam Bidawed were killed in Mosul. They were driving when they were stopped and given an ultimatum to convert to Islam. When they refused they were shot. Ganni was the pastor of the Chaldean Church of the Holy Spirit in Mosul.

On **August 14, 2007**, Tel Azer and nearby Jazeera, two Yezidi villages, were bombed by large tractor trailers filled with explosives. In Tel Azer, 336 Yezidis were killed, and about 1,500 were wounded. In Jazeera up to 300 more were killed, and an unknown number were wounded. This group continued to grow in strength, training in Syria, and preoccupied itself with struggles for land in Syria against President Bashar al Asaad. Meanwhile, its interest in Mosul and other parts of Iraq continued.<sup>2</sup>

The withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq began in December 2007.

St. Paul's Church, located in the Majmooaa/al-Thaqafiya District in Central Mosul, was bombed by terrorists a second time on **January 6, 2008**.

In January, the U.S. and Iraqi forces killed or captured over 4,600 militants, locating and destroying over 3,000 weapons caches in the Mosul area. This left al-Qaeda in Iraq with only one last major insurgent stronghold, Diyala. On July 29, 2008 forces retook Diyala, destroying 500 weapons caches, killing five militants, and capturing 483 militants.

On **January 17, 2008** a car bomb exploded outside the fourth-century Church of the Immaculate Virgin (Our Lady of Purity; al-Gahera/al-Tahra/al-Tahira/al-Tahra al-Fawqaniyya). Ten armed men stormed the church, planted explosives throughout it, and set the bombs off, wounding three people and destroying most of it. At least two people were injured.

([http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi\\_christians\\_fear\\_more\\_attacks\\_after\\_two\\_church\\_bombings\\_in\\_mosul/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi_christians_fear_more_attacks_after_two_church_bombings_in_mosul/) Accessed May 20, 2016)

In **2008**, gunmen kidnapped Mosul's Chaldean archbishop, Paulus Rahho, and killed his driver and two bodyguards. Rahho had told the people not to fear Daesh. The abductors stuffed Rahho into the trunk of a car, from where he had been able to call a colleague by mobile phone and instruct the church not to pay ransom. He was found dead a few days later in a shallow grave. On **March 13, 2008**, Rahho's body was found buried in a shallow grave near Mosul.

Najim Abdulla Fatoohi was killed in the **summer of 2008** as Muslims were trying to scare Christians out of Mosul. Nabil Ghanem Basheer was also killed about the same time, just because he was Christian. This was a slow steady war against the Christians that was effective in pushing out around 100 families per year. They would kill one in each school district, as a warning to other Christians there.

A Muslim man had walked into the store of a Christian man, Hazim Toma, on **October 4, 2008**, the day after a Ramadan, pulled out a pistol, shot him dead and fled.<sup>3</sup> On another occasion, a man had been shot dead walking to church. Some had been arrested and had spent days or weeks in detention while being badgered to convert to Islam. Many had been kidnapped, including babies taken from mothers' arms, to be held for ransom. Busloads of young Christian college students had been ferried off and killed on their way to attend classes at Mosul University. Women had received threatening messages demanding that they stop working. Families had received death threats attached to demands for \$10,000.

By the **end of the October, 2008**, 14 Christians had been killed in that month and more than 13,000 Christians had fled to small Christian villages in the Nineveh Plains. (Spokesman: Shooter in Iraqi uniform kills U.S. troops, Staff Writer, CNN, November 12, 2008).

Seven bodies belonging to Christians were found in the streets of Mosul on **early November, 2008**. A convent was attacked and two nuns were killed and a third severely injured. (Fleeing Christians Face New Hardships in Turkey, Staff Writer, Compass Direct News, November 14, 2008). Around 500 families fled the city as a result, where they found refuge in Churches and with relatives in nearby villages. (Attacks in Mosul force Christians to flee, Associated Press, MSNBC, *October 11, 2003*.)

On **Tuesday, October 14, 2008** a homemade bomb placed at the door of the Miskinta Church in the Old City district of Mosul detonated and caused some damage to the building but no casualties (In Mosul, Iraqi Christians brave the violence to celebrate Christmas, Sam Dagher, The New York Times, December 25, 2008). 1,795 Christian families left Mosul between late September and mid-October 2008. (Iraqi Christians Flee Mosul in the Wake of Attacks, Sam Dagher, New York Times, October 14, 2008)

In early **October 2008** Mosul police had found the bodies of seven Christians who appeared to have been kidnapped by gunmen and killed execution-style. The latest was a construction worker killed on October 8th. As a result of these and other deaths and threats, 744 Christian families, about 3,750 individuals, had fled their homes in Christian villages in rural areas near Mosul, as Sunni Muslim extremists had increased attacks against them between October 4 and 11. These included 200 families from Qaraqoush, 187 families from Teleskof, 145 families from Bartolla, 96 families from Bashiqa, 47 families from Karamless, 37 families from Telkaif and 32 families from Alqoush. Most went to Baghdad in the short term until bombings began there, after which they moved to the Kurdistan Region or abroad.<sup>4</sup>

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) estimated that more than 2,200 families, or some 13,000 people, fled their homes in **October 2008**. It said this represented about half the province's Christian population. Some 400 families had crossed the border into Syria, while others had gone to safe areas to the north and east of Mosul and to neighboring Dohuk, Erbil and Kirkuk provinces. (Christians trickling back to their homes in Mosul, Staff Writer, IRIN, November 6, 2008.)

The Iraqi government, on **October 30, 2008**, said it would offer each returnee Christian family \$865, and \$250 to those still displaced. The government had granted Christian government workers and students leave of absence from work and classes until November 1. By **November 3, 2008**, about 400 Christian families, (some 2,400 individuals) had returned to their homes and 115 displaced Christian families had received a one-time payment of \$250. (Christians trickling back to their homes in Mosul, Staff Writer, IRIN, November 6, 2008.)

Al-Qaeda sent a threat to a Mosul arch-bishop in November 2008 warning all Christians to leave Iraq or else be killed.<sup>[32]</sup>

The Convent of the Word (Dar al-Kalima) is located in the Majmooaa al-Thaqafiya District, Mosul. Terrorists bombed the church on **January 6, 2009**

(<http://www.hrwf.net/images/forbnews/2009/iraq%202009.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2009).

In **January 2009** 15 Christians were killed in Mosul and more Christians fled to the Nineveh Plains and Christian villages in Iraqi Kurdistan seeking safety. (Ex-Christians of Mosul, Watchdog, Apostolic Exarch, September 17, 2015)

While the U.S. "troop surge" and "Awakening" movement left al-Zarqawi's movement "all but dead" in 2009, it survived and metastasized into ISIS/Daesh. (How ISIS Spread in the Middle East, David Ignatius, The Atlantic, October 2015).

The Church of the Virgin of Fatima (Athraa Fatima) in the Faisaliah Neighborhood of Mosul was hit by a car bomb that exploded on the morning of **July 14, 2009** near the church. The building was seriously damaged. (Car Bomb at Catholic Church in Mosul, Iraq, Staff Writer, Catholic Online, July 14, 2009).

The St. George Church in East Mosul was bombed on **September 29, 2009**. The bombs were hidden in a cart of vegetables.

[http://www.iraqichristians.info/English/Aramean\\_Churches\\_Mosul\\_Attack\\_24\\_12\\_2009.htm](http://www.iraqichristians.info/English/Aramean_Churches_Mosul_Attack_24_12_2009.htm), Accessed May 20, 2016. A Christian and two Muslims were killed in the explosion, and others were injured. (<http://www.hrwf.net/images/forbnews/2009/iraq%202009.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2016). Daesh took control of the church in June 2014.

St. Ephraim (Mar Aprim/Ephram) Church was located in the Al Shurta/Al Maidan neighborhood, in the western Jadida (New Mosul) district, on the east side of central Mosul, overlooking the Tigris River. It had a large cross on the outer wall built into the building, which made it a target for Daesh in their attempt to remove religious symbols. On **November 26, 2009** it was bombed and heavily damaged but remained in the hands of Christians. (General Information about Mosul City, Staff Writer, Iraq Institution for Development, August 29, 2015). (Op-Ed: London is like Mosul: Christians have Vanished, Giulio Meotti, Arutz Sheva, June 15, 2015)





St. Ephraim Church (Mar Ephrem)

<http://baretly.net/index.php?topic=37789.0>

St. Theresa Convent (Dar Mar Theresa) of the Dominican Sisters, located in the al-Jadeed/al-Jadida (New Mosul) Neighborhood, West Mosul, was named for the famous nun who worked in 20th century India. Terrorists bombed the convent on **November 26, 2009**.

(<http://www.hrwf.net/images/forbnews/2009/iraq%202009.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2009)

Two churches in Mosul were bombed on **December 15, 2009**. Our Lady of the Annunciation (al Beshara) Church in the Muhandiseen neighborhood of Mosul was hit a second time by a bomb planted against the outer wall.

[http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi\\_christians\\_fear\\_more\\_attacks\\_after\\_two\\_church\\_bombings\\_in\\_mosul/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi_christians_fear_more_attacks_after_two_church_bombings_in_mosul/) accessed May 20, 2016). (Another Church Bombed in Mosul City!! but who cares, Staff Writer, Iraqi "Translators/Interpreters" and Christians Blog, December 17, 2009). The 4<sup>th</sup> century Church of the Immaculate Virgin (Our Lady of Purity; al-Gahera/al-Tahra/al-Tahira/al-Tahra al-Fawqaniyya) was also bombed that day, for a second time. Four people were killed and 40 were injured. The church was badly damaged.

([http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi\\_christians\\_fear\\_more\\_attacks\\_after\\_two\\_church\\_bombings\\_in\\_mosul/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi_christians_fear_more_attacks_after_two_church_bombings_in_mosul/) Accessed May 20, 2016)



<http://www.iraqpressagency.com/?p=120276&lang=en>



<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic,372389.0.html>

St. George (Mar Gorgees) Church, Monastery and Cemetery was located six miles north-east of Mosul, on the east side of the river Tigris, four miles from Telkef. Built before the tenth century, it comprised a large church and a second smaller church built in 1924. (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016) Sometime in **December 2009**, IS and removed the crosses that stood on the dome and the roof of the monastery.



St. Thomas Church (Mar Toma) and Museum, located in the Khazraj Neighborhood of Mosul, was 1,200 years old. On **December 23, 2009** the church was bombed but not destroyed.

Talal Butros Telco (44), and his wife Evonne Hanna Mickael (44), and their 3 sons left Mosul shortly after the bombing and another incident that made them more fearful. Some Muslims went to scare his Christian neighbor, who jumped over the roof over to his house to escape. Evonne was out of the house but the boys were home. Daesh fighters shot at his neighbor's house. They didn't have any guns, so they went to the roof and locked the doors. The Iraqi Army heard the shooting and came to the scene, so Daesh fighters ran away. Talal was a taxi driver, and at 11 pm he and his family fled the city in his taxi. They drove to Battniya, where his wife's relatives lived. They found a house after looking for one week, and rented it.



[http://www.atlastours.net/iraq/mosul\\_churches.html](http://www.atlastours.net/iraq/mosul_churches.html)

In **2010**, reports emerged in Mosul of people being stopped in the streets, asked for their identity cards, and shot if they had a first or last name indicating Assyrian or Christian origin.

On **May 2, 2010**, four buses carrying Christian students from Qaraqosh to Mosul were attacked. During the assault a Christian girl was killed, and 120 were injured. Jamil Salih still carries shrapnel in his head from that attack. O. (INSHALLAH Arab Christians in Iraq, Michele Borzoni, Terra Project, no date)

On **May 16, 2010**, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Mujahedeen Sharia Council, was killed by U.S. forces at his safe house near Tikrit. The Council then elected Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al-Badri, called “Abu Bakir al-Baghdadi” (Father of Bakir from Baghdad) as its new leader. He was born near Samarra, Iraq near Baghdad in 1971. He had been detained by the U.S. but was considered a low-level fighter. He thus became the leader of Islamic State in Iraq and al-Qaeda in Iraq. (Iraqi Insurgent Group Names New Leaders, Anthony Shadid, The New York Times, May 16, 2010)



Wikipedia/ Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al-Badri, called “Abu Bakir al-Baghdadi” (Father of Bakir from Baghdad)

Osama bin Laden was killed by the U.S. on **May 2, 2011**. Al-Baghdadi vowed revenge. The fighters who had served Zarqawi joined forces with al-Baghdadi, adding strength in the Mosul and Raqqa area, creating opportunities further north in Iraq and in Syria, and renaming their group Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). The leadership of al-Qaeda passed to bin Laden’s second in command, Egyptian surgeon Ayman Mohammed Rabie al-Zawahiri. He should not be confused with al-Zarqawi, the Iraqi terrorist, who was already dead at this point. A conflict arose between al-Baghdadi and al-Zawahiri about the addition of fighters from Syria’s al-Nusra Front into al-Qaeda, which resulted in the separation of ISI from al-Qaeda, with about 80% of the Syrian fighters aligning with al-Baghdadi and ISI. This strengthened ISI in Syria considerably, adding the new fighters to those inherited from Zarqawi.



Wikipedia/Ayman Mohammed Rabie al-Zawahiri

In retaliation for bin Laden's death, the ISI pledged on its website to carry out 100 attacks across Iraq featuring various methods of attack, including raids, suicide attacks, roadside bombs and small arms attacks, in all cities and rural areas across the country. (Terrorist Designation of Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri), (Press release), United States Department of State, October 4, 2011.)

ISI quickly began to use this influx of fighters to secure strongholds in the areas between Raqqa, Syria and Mosul, Iraq. On **August 15, 2011**, a wave of ISI suicide attacks beginning in Mosul resulted in 70 deaths. It was clear by then that Mosul was their target. Their successes there emboldened them. They were testing the defenses of Mosul, and found neither the Kurds nor the Arabs rose to its vigorous defense, so they began developing plans for its overthrow.

On **October 4, 2011**, the U.S. State Department listed al-Baghdadi as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” and offered a \$10-million reward for information leading to his capture or death. (Christians in Mosul, Iraq, Pay “Protection” Tax, Warren Mass, The New American, June 26, 2014).

Seventy Iraqi churches were attacked or bombed between June 2004 and October 2011: 43 in Baghdad, 19 in Mosul, 7 in Kirkuk and 1 in Ramadi. General Ahmed M. Aljaboury, Director General of the Mosul police said in published remarks that **between 2005 and 2011** his forces "recorded the assassination of about 69 Christians, including university students, priests, female employees and housewives." (Mosul Iraq's "Most Dangerous City" for Christians, Staff Writer, Worthy News, August 20, 2012)

The last U.S. troops left Iraq on December 18, 2011

Al-Baghdadi's first audio message was released in July 2012 and predicted future victories for the Islamic State. (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State's driving force, Aaron Y Zelin (Washington Institute for Near East Policy), BBC, July 31, 2014).

On April 8, 2013, al Baghdadi announced that ISI had been reformed into Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which was soon after altered to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). (Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Nusrah Front emerge as rebranded single entity, Thomas Joscelyn, the Long War Journal, April 9, 2013.) Their increasing strength drew attention and funding from citizens in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and brought fighters from Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Egypt, and other predominantly Sunni Muslim countries.

The people of Iraq referred to ISIS using its equivalent Arabic acronym, which, when read as a word in Arabic, sounded like "Daesh." Daesh leaders threatened to cut out the tongue of anyone calling them "Daesh" because that word in Arabic meant something close to "stamp out" or "destroy." Since the term was coined as a word by their enemies, it conveyed a veiled threat to Daesh to stamp out their organization. That Daesh leaders took offense to their own chosen acronym when spoken as a word provided perverse pleasure to those targeted by the group. It was the only recognizable term for the group in Iraq.

Daesh sought to realize the Muslim caliphate envisioned by its Prophet Mohammed, which had been minimally realized at several times in history. The Caliph, successor of Mohammad "appointed by God" was to be the ruler of all Muslims in the world, and eventually subjugate all other people in the world. The Sunni Muslim religion had grown and spread throughout the world since the last caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, pressed its will on a large portion of the Middle East, but no significant attempt had been made prior to Daesh to capitalize on world-wide Sunni growth.

The violently anti-West stance of Daesh drew the term "terrorist state." It was "supra-nationalist" in that it sought domination of the Middle East and beyond and drew disaffected Muslims throughout the world to its cause. Taking a new twist on fascism, which had emerged as a White-supremacy nationalist phenomenon in the previous century, it was a Sunni Muslim supremacist movement with a de-facto state carved out of Iraq and Syria, bent on domination of all states.

Daesh was one of several groups that sprung up in opposition to the U.S. in Iraq on the border between Iraq and Syria. Daesh first became famous for its propagandist beheadings of Western journalists in the early days when it moved to create an iron curtain of secrecy around its inner workings. It capitalized on the Western media's limited ability to pass on theatrical videos of blood and gore that were its own financial life-blood, and its preoccupation with dangers faced by journalists as they covered the "news" worldwide.

The context was ripe for Daesh to reap huge temporary gains in the area at a low cost. Iraq remained deeply divided into two Muslim branches with long histories, over who was the rightful successor of Mohammed. Kurds and Arabs both leveled claims to the Nineveh Plains area which included Mosul, but the Arab presence there restricted Kurds from making any moves, and the Sunni religion of its residents made the Shia government's control there weak. Syria was weakened by opposition to the government and the interference of foreign nations that initiated bombing campaigns there. Daesh moved into the power vacuum and ruthlessly claimed lands that were the most vulnerable, making Raqqa their stronghold.

Tens of thousands of Christians left Mosul between 1983 and 2014 as a result of persecution. Some were waiting in nearby Christian villages or Christian suburbs of larger cities Dohuk and Erbil, hoping to get their homes, their businesses, and their lives back.

Those who had remained behind had even been given recent warnings of what the jihadists had in mind for them. They were more often families with all their living wrapped up in their homes, rental properties, and other businesses or elderly who had refused to evacuate with their children's families.

## Chapter 2: Taking the Sunni Stronghold

The Americans pushed for Shia Muslim majority rule in Iraq following their war to topple Saddam Hussein's Sunni Muslim minority government. In **March 2014**, Shia Iraqi President Nouri Maliki placed General Mahdi Gharawi, also a Shia Muslim, in charge of predominantly Sunni Mosul. Gharawi brought in mostly Shia officers from the south to rule over predominantly Sunni Mosul along with the Kurds, who had dominated the Iraqi security forces and local government in Mosul after the U.S. invasion.<sup>1</sup> There were about 2 million people in Mosul at the time.<sup>1</sup> The majority were Sunni Muslims, some of whose families Saddam had given \$35,000 to relocate there from other cities in an effort to "Arabize" and wrest control of Mosul and its oil fields away from the Kurds.



General Mahdi Gharawi/ <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Oct-15/274099-iraqi-general-disputes-baghdads-version-of-events-that-led-to-fall-of-mosul.ashx>

The Americans had opposed General Gharawi for years before he was posted over Mosul, for his management of Site Four, a Baghdad jail, during which time Sunni Muslim prisoners were tortured and sold to the Shia militias. They wanted him out of the Army, but Iraqi President Maliki was only willing to reassign him. The Americans were sure that abuses would continue wherever Gharawi was posted, and this would deepen the divide between Shias and Sunnis in the time when nation-building required bringing them closer together.<sup>1</sup>

Kurds serving in the Iraqi Army took as many of the Army posts in Mosul as the Baghdad government would allow, so they could be nearer to their homes in the Kurdistan Region and because Mosul had Kurdish roots that would be important to them for the future. The Kurds were always under the control of the Shias from Baghdad, however, in the entire broader Mosul area that remained contested by both the Iraqis and the Kurds after the Americans left Iraq. But Iraqi President Maliki became deeply concerned



over time that the Kurds had too much power in Mosul, and that would strengthen their control over the area as they pushed for independence from Iraq.

This power-sharing in Mosul by people who were not, themselves, from Mosul weakened Mosul's defenses. The Sunnis in Mosul were given little control over the city, and the hard-fisted capricious manner with which the Shias ruled Mosul residents under Gharawi severely angered and alienated the Sunni residents over time. Sunnis saw him as a murderer who used Iraq's war on extremism as a cover for extorting money from businesses and menacing innocent people with arrests and killings.<sup>1</sup> They desperately wanted a change in leadership, and a stronger role in their governance. They were open to embracing any invading Sunni force, even Daesh, in the hope of improving their situation.

The Shia and Kurdish soldiers and officials assigned to Mosul had their families and their hearts elsewhere, as Mosul was not their home, and they were not as likely to defend it as strongly as they would their home areas.

Before Daesh entered Mosul, the group conquered most of Anbar Province in Central and Western Iraq, along with the major road linking Baghdad to the northern cities.<sup>1</sup> The Iraqi Army was embarrassed, and finger-pointing between factions of the government in Baghdad weakened the Army's central command even further, leaving relationships between Gharawi and other generals strained. Some of the Iraqi Army generals were busy in Anbar in the **summer of 2014** trying to win back the territory that the Army had lost to Daesh, and had few resources to spare to defend Mosul, which would have strengthened Gharawi while potentially weakening them in the Anbar battlefield. The Army was spread too thinly over a wide area, and had very limited training, weaponry and ammunition to defend Mosul. Colonel Dhiyab Ahmed al-Assi al-Obeidi later reported that he had only one machine gun in his entire battalion, while Daesh was known to have a vehicle with a top mounted machine gun for every four men.<sup>1</sup>

In **late May**, Iraqi security forces arrested seven Daesh operatives in Mosul and learned from them that Daesh planned to attack Mosul in **early June**. General Gharawi shared this information with Maliki and Iraqi Army Generals, asking for reinforcements, but was rebuffed. On the books, he had many more soldiers than were actually on site. There was widespread problem in Iraq with ghost soldiers – men on the books who paid their officers half their salaries and in return did not have to show up for duty. Investigators from the defense ministry had sent a report on the phenomenon to superiors in 2013 but nothing was heard back.<sup>1</sup> There were nearly 25,000 Iraqi Army soldiers listed on the books as being stationed in Mosul under General Gharawi's command in early June 2014; the reality, was at best 10,000.<sup>1</sup>

The Kurdish Peshmerga nearby, an autonomous military force, offered to reinforce the Iraqi Army to defend Mosul, but President Nouri al-Malaki refused to allow them to assist, fearing they would gain advantage in the disputed area that had been in contention since the U.S. invasion of Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

By **early June**, it was widely known that Daesh leader Abu Abdulrahman al-Bilawi, with about 1,500 men, was advancing into central and northern Iraq. Even before Daesh reached Mosul, Christians had been leaving the city at a rate of around ten families a day in fear of the Daesh advance.<sup>5</sup>

At 2:30 am on **June 4<sup>th</sup>**, convoys of Daesh soldiers in pickups mounted with machine guns, entered Mosul from the West, shooting their way through the 2-man check-points. The first line of Mosul's defense was the Sixth Brigade of the Third Iraqi Army Division. On paper, the brigade had 2,500 men, but only about 500 Iraqi Army soldiers were there at the time.<sup>1</sup> They secured positions within the city, and created

makeshift command and control centers there. They had not expected to be so successful. Word of their success spread and other fighters were emboldened to join them.

As more Daesh fighters raced towards Mosul at 2:30 am on **June 6**, the jihadists still had very limited expectations. By 3:30 a.m., Daesh was fighting inside the city. They rushed into five districts in their hundreds. As they entered the city, they shot, hanged, burned, and crucified some of the Iraqi soldiers.<sup>1</sup> The Daesh commander, Abu Abdulrahman al-Bilawi, had entered the city and was setting up a stronger command and control center. Shia Federal Police under Gharawi's command immediately engaged them while their numbers were relatively small. At some point, he was cornered by federal police under Gharawi's command. Rather than surrendering, he blew himself up with a grenade.<sup>1</sup>

The city is divided by the Tigris River into East and West sections. As the Iraqi Army was losing in the western side, Aboud Qanbar, at the time the Defense Ministry's Deputy Chief of Staff and Ali Ghaidan, then Commander of the ground forces, decided to retreat from the West side across the bridge to the East side. This caused mass desertions by the Shia members of the Iraqi Army who assumed their commanders had fled.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of the fighting, Christians, and many Muslims, and police and soldiers were all beginning to leave. **By June 6**, Daesh was already restricting Christians from taking their cars as they fled, but they let many of the people go even though they had been told by Daesh leaders not to do so.<sup>6</sup>

Badran Hikmat Suleiman (44) and his wife Amal Georgees Faraj (38) and their two sons, Matti (age 13) and Raid (16), left Mosul on June 6, 2014 from their home on the East side of the city. They were members of Mar Ephram Church. They heard bombs going off, and left suddenly. They got out before Daesh took control, so they were able to get their valuables and IDs out, but she forgot some of her gold and her IDs at the house. They went to Teleskof for a month to stay with friends, then to Dohuk a rented apartment for 19 months. When the camp was built in Seje, in March 2016, they were given a caravan (#29).

General Gharawi received a call from Maliki to hold the field until the arrival of Qanbar, the deputy chief of staff at the Defense Ministry, and Ghaidan, who commanded Iraqi ground forces. Qanbar is a member of Maliki's tribe, while Ghaidan had long assisted Maliki in security operations. The two men outranked Gharawi and automatically took formal charge of the Mosul command on **June 7**. This disruption of leadership in the midst of the battle perhaps weakened the defense further.

The same day, Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani again offered to send Kurdish Peshmerga fighters to help defend Mosul. The offer went all the way up to Maliki, who rejected it twice through his Defense Minister.<sup>1</sup>

Daesh fighters in Mosul had reached over 2,000 fighters, as they were welcomed and joined in their operations against Shias and minority groups by the city's angry Sunni residents.<sup>1</sup>

On the afternoon of **June 8**, the Islamic State surged. More than 100 vehicles, carrying at least 400 men, had crossed to Mosul from Syria since the start of the battle. Sleeper cells hiding in the city had been activated and neighborhoods rallied to them.

On **June 9**, Mosul police visited senior Christian leaders in Mosul and advised them that the entire Christian community should leave Mosul quickly. Many did leave.

By **June 9**, the fourth battalion's Colonel Obeidi and 40 of his men were among the very last local police fighting to hold back Daesh in western Mosul. The rest had either joined Daesh or run away. He had stationed his 30 man Iraqi emergency SWAT force at the Mosul Hotel, an abandoned building on the western bank of the Tigris River. Newly appointed Ghaidan and Qanbar still had Army forces on the West bank of the river, and were working from their command center at the airport.

Before **4:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 9th**, a military water tanker filled with explosives raced towards the Mosul Hotel where Obeidi and his men were stationed. The police fired at the tanker, which detonated, setting off a massive fireball and hurtling shrapnel. "I didn't feel anything," said Obeidi, whose leg was ripped open by the blast. "The sound shook the whole of Mosul but I didn't hear a thing." Yet Obeidi continued fighting with his men for some time afterward.

Newly appointed battlefield commanders Ghaidan and Qanbar sacked a divisional commander after he refused to defend Obeidi and his men at the Mosul Hotel battle post. The sacked commander, who reported to Gharawi, theoretically commanded 6,000 men, though many were ghost soldiers or AWOL in the battle already, and he thought it would be a suicide mission.<sup>1</sup>

Zaid Ammer Waddie (24) and his parents and his sister (23) lived on the East side of Mosul, which was the last part of Mosul to fall to Daesh. At around **4:30 pm on June 9<sup>th</sup>**, they heard the big truck bomb that Daesh detonated at the Hotel on the West side of the river.

Zaid Ammer, a single Christian man in his 20s, was preparing chemotherapy agents for cancer patients in Ibn al-Ather Pediatric Hospital on the East side of Mosul when his family called him at 11 pm to return home to evacuate with them. He walked the ten minutes from the hospital to his house, and saw 3 Humvees filled with Iraqi Army soldiers leaving the city.

Near **midnight on June 9th**, the Iraqi soldiers finished their retreat, leaving the city under Daesh control.

Zaid and his family gathered their possessions together, packed into the car, and left by **1 am on the 10<sup>th</sup>**, an hour after the last Iraqi Army soldiers left.

Normally it would take an hour to drive from Mosul to Duhok, but that night, with Sunni Muslims and Christians leaving the city at the same time, it took around six hours just to reach the checkpoint near Dohuk, where they turned away from the crowds and passed toward Al Quosh. The Peshmerga were not allowing Muslims to enter the Kurdistan Region from Mosul at that time, and the drama this caused at the checkpoint had caused major backups. Muslims had to turn south to Al Quosh or further away.

Zaid and his family remained in Al Quosh in a house the church allowed them to rent. He grew his beard out so he could return to Mosul without being caught. He returned to Mosul twice to work in the hospital before the ultimatum was given for all Christians to leave permanently. On the first visit, Christians were still coming to the hospital to bring their babies for treatment.

On his second visit, Zaid saw no Christians in the hospital. His Muslim manager gave him his salary and told him to leave and not come back, as he had been instructed by Daesh to get all Christian workers out of the hospital. As he left the hospital, he saw that the police station had been burned. He passed two Daesh fighters with their faces covered by black cloths, holding guns, and kept his distance from them.

After spending two months in Al Quosh in a free house, his family spent two months in Zakho paying rent, before they moved to Seje in October, where the rent was cheaper than in Dohuk.

There was heavy fighting overnight. Iraqi Army soldiers and Federal police were burning their camps and discarding their uniforms as they retreated, giving up the battle, allowing the militants to control much of Mosul by **midday on June 10th**.<sup>7</sup>

Hikmat Suleiman Dawood (75) and his wife Nahla Faraj Aziz (64) left Mosul **June 10, 2014** at 2 am at the Saida en Baweeza Checkpoint. They were members of Mar Afram Church, and their married children escaped with their families to Dohuk before they left. Daesh was already in control but was not yet robbing the people there, and they were passed through in their car. They went to Teleskof for a month with relatives, then went to Dohuk to a rented apartment. They moved to the caravans in the camp in Seje Village (number 28) in March, 2016. Her big house was afterward turned into an Islamic Court.

Sarwan Behnam Dawood (41) and his wife Nadia Waleed Antoine (30) and their four daughters left Mosul on **June 10, 2014** around 2 am in their private car, before Daesh was controlling the Saido Baweeza checkpoint. They were members of Mar Afram Church and stayed in a house belonging to the church in Al Quosh. A week later, believing Daesh's assurances that they could return, he returned to Mosul alone, wanting to sell four cars that he had there. He was only there three days, and was unable to sell his cars. He left in an older car at 5 am at the same checkpoint on June 17<sup>th</sup> and was not searched or robbed. His house was later painted with the Arabic "N." He later heard that his cars were taken by Daesh, his metal shop was stolen, and one of the Daesh leaders was living in his house. They went to live in church apartments in Dohuk, and nineteen months later, in March 2006, they were moved to a caravan in the new Christian Camp in Seje (number 34). They have no backup power source or water heating, and are in a very tiny space.

Muneer Ibrahim Fatoohi (55) and his wife Mahnal Fathil Ibrahim (51), a Christian couple, also left Mosul with their two sons and a daughter on **June 10, 2014**. He took his family and valuables to Teleskof stayed in a house belonging to his sister, but there was no electricity and the water service was poor. He returned to their home in Mosul with his wife.

Muneer Nahmat Khalil (43) and his wife Maha Mumtaz Ablahad (39) were members of the Mar Afram Church. Muneer had acquired a permanent disability as a five-year-old when a nurse gave him a polio vaccine and hit a nerve with the needle, and walked with a crutch from then on. They didn't have any children. Her parents had fled Mosul in November 2011 after terrorists murdered Maha's brother-in-law and his brother in Mosul in November 2011 while they were working in their metal shop in the downtown area, after checking their IDs and seeing that they were Christians. The family had

The couple left Mosul on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to visit Maha's family in Qaraqush. Muneer and Maha were aware that Daesh had entered Mosul while they were visiting Qaraqush, but fighting had not yet entered the East side where their home was located. They returned to Mosul on June 9<sup>th</sup>. They received calls from family and friends on that day and the next, urging them to leave the city. They packed what they could in their car and left at noon on June 10<sup>th</sup>. By then, Daesh had already overtaken their side of the city and was controlling the checkpoints. As they approached the long lines of cars evacuating through the funnel at the checkpoint. He was driving a beaten up 1980 Toyota Corona. They told them to get out of the car so they could search it. They found nothing worth taking in the car and said it was so old they didn't want it, but they searched their bodies, a man searched him and a woman searched her, probing even their private parts, and they took her gold ring from her finger. They did not confiscate their IDs and Passports.

They drove to Qaraqush, stopped for a visit with Maha's family, and moved on to the Christian village of al-Quosh, but finding no space, they moved to Berevawa, a small Christian village near Shekhan. Muqtar Georgees cleaned out his chicken house and let them live there for four months. Then they moved to the Peter and Paul Church in Dohuk, where many families were seeking refuge. They lived there 16 months, receiving food aid. By then, a camp was built for Christians outside Seje, and they moved into a caravan. They live in cabin 26. They are hoping to move to the Check Republic, which has opened their borders to Christians.

Talib Jameel Mammo (37) his wife Parwin William Slewa (29), and their two sons Jameel (5), and John (3), a Christian family, were living on the West side of the Tigris River, where Daesh entered with strength on June 10<sup>th</sup> from the West. Talib wasn't working at the time. The water and electricity was irregular, and prices of food and gas were rising. His wife had to wear the hijab. All of his Muslim neighbors aligned with IS, and invited him to go to the mosque with him, thinking that with Islam in the ascendancy, Christians might convert.

At 3 pm on June 10<sup>th</sup>, as reports spread of federal police burning their camps and discarding their uniforms, the Nineveh governor and his adviser met with Qanbar and Ghaidan in the Operation Command near the airport.<sup>1</sup>

Nail Yacoub Yousef (52) and his wife Enam Khuder Georgees (52), left Mosul on June 10, 2014 in their own car. Their children, three of whom were married with children, left separately in their cars at the same time. They went to Tel Kef, nearby, and rented a house.

Ameer Ablahad Saman (59), and his wife Atemad Haseeb Salim (48) left Mosul on June 10, 2014 and moved to Seje Village. They left as soon as they heard the gunfire, taking all their money and valuables. His wife had a friend in Seje, so they came to stay with her one day, then slept in the Muqtar Sabri's house four days. Then they moved to share a house with another friend in Seje.

They stayed in Seje 13 days then returned to Mosul and stayed there 20 days so Ameer could continue his work as a car mechanic. The Christians there were telling him it was fairly safe. Atemad wore a hijab when they returned. He didn't like moving about in other people's houses and just wanted to go home. His church, Mar Kulos, was still holding services.

Ghaidan and Qanbar also retreated in a larger convoy to the East side of the Tigris River. Their retreat created the impression that Iraq's security forces were deserting, Gharawi said. "This is the straw that broke the camel's back. This was the biggest mistake."<sup>1</sup>

Soon after, General Gharawi rang Ghaidan to tell him. "I am going to be killed. I am surrounded by all directions. Send the prime minister my greetings. Tell the Prime Minister I have done everything possible that I can do." He decided to fight his way across the Tigris to eastern Mosul.<sup>1</sup>

General Gharawi and his few remaining men crammed into five vehicles and headed across the river. By June 10, after six days of fighting, Daesh controlled the city and the international airport. On the east bank, Gharawi's five vehicles were set ablaze. They dodged bullets and stones. Three of his men were shot dead. It was every man for himself.<sup>1</sup> Gharawi and three of his remaining men commandeered an armored vehicle with flat tires and headed north to safety.

Daesh acquired three divisions' worth of up-to-date American arms and munitions—including M1129 Stryker 120-mm mortars and 2,300 armored Humvee vehicles from the then fleeing, or since massacred, Iraqi army, which further strengthened their position inside Mosul and enabled them to attack outlying Christian villages in the following days.<sup>8</sup>

Daesh promptly moved to exert its control over Mosul. They seized more than \$400 million in cash from Mosul banks.<sup>9</sup> The Sunni people of Mosul welcomed the Sunni Daesh fighters, joining in the battle and pointing out the homes of Christians, letting them know which ones were wealthier.<sup>2,10</sup> The homes of Christians were marked with the red Arabic letter N - for Nasara – the Koranic term for Christians thought to be derived from the word “Nazereth.”

At first, Daesh assured the Christians that their communities would be protected.<sup>11</sup> Daesh was focusing on Shia Muslims as their strongest foe, meanwhile lulling Christians into a false sense of security. The fighters said they had orders not to do anything against Christians. They handed out green sheets specifically designed as propaganda for Christians, describing their beliefs in a very slanted manner, stressing that they believed in Jesus as a prophet.<sup>9</sup>

Many of the remaining Christians, who were already predisposed to stay there by that time, believed the propaganda enough to remain. They thought that if they followed the rules, they would be okay. They had lived under Sunni Muslims all their lives. They were ill-informed about how much more violent and extremist the Daesh Sunnis were. Many of the Christians who had already left had been able to take their lighter valuables, money and gold out of the city, and had retained their cars, but those who remained for the second wave of departures would be stripped of their wealth and their cars as they left.

Aseel Ameer Ablahad (28), her husband Luay Joseph Yacoub (28), and daughter Noor Luay Yacoub (5), Dali (2) lived in Hadvah District, left **June 11, 2014**, the day after her parents. They saw people running out in the streets leaving Mosul, and they saw an Iraqi Army vehicle burning in front of their house. They left Mosul at **11:30 pm** on the way to Tel Kef, but ran low on gas, so they stayed with a relative that night and filled up their tank. Their neighbors in Mosul called them and told them it was safe to come back. They returned to their home in Mosul, and their Muslim neighbors offered to help them.

Talal Matti Yacoub (57) and his wife Noal Abdulghani Nasser (47) and their two boys and two girls left Mosul **June 12**, 2014. They lived in “new Mosul” on the West side of the Tigris River. The Nunery of St Theresa, near to them, was being repeatedly bombed, and the priest who managed the Nunery was being harassed, and eventually evacuated to Europe, leaving the Nuns behind. The younger Nuns evacuated later, leaving the oldest ones behind. As a result of this persecution, their family and others in that neighborhood began to evacuate. Because they left early, they were able to get their valuables and IDs out with their car.

A month after they left Mosul, their Muslim neighbors called to ask them if they could rent the house they had left behind, and they agreed they could just stay there for free. The Muslim family then left, when warned they would be killed by Daesh for occupying Christian houses without permission. They called to ask what had happened to their house, but their neighbors were afraid to say anything. They moved to their relatives in Dohuk for a week, they they came to rent a house in Seje. The owner of the house was in Canada.

# Chapter 3: Expelling Christians

By **June 16<sup>th</sup>**, after Daesh had been in the city for a week, progress with exterminating the Police and Iraqi Army members from Mosul was nearly complete, and civilian Christians and Shias became the next target. Masked gunmen in small groups of three or more, some from Daesh and others just Muslim residents of the city, began canvassing Mosul for Christians to plunder. They would ask the Sunni Muslim residents in each neighborhood where the Christians and Shia lived.<sup>12</sup>

Also on **June 16, 2014**, the message was received by Iraqi News Organization that Daesh had ordered the destruction of all Christian churches in Mosul. (ISIL orders destruction of all churches in Mosul, Hawar Berwani, Iraqi News, June 16, 2014.)

Nail Yacoub Yousef (52) and his wife Enam Khuder Georgees (52), a week after they left the first time, returned to Mosul on **June 17<sup>th</sup>** and their daughter also returned separately, bringing their valuables back with them. As they passed through Bashiqa, Daesh didn't give them any problem returning. They didn't have any problems in Mosul while they were there, until the expulsion order was broadcast over the loudspeaker.

Up to that point, the Christians were allowed to stay if they paid a tax. This tax, called "Jizyah," was discussed in the Qur'an (9:29):

Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the *Jizyah* willingly while they are humbled.

Christians who didn't fight in Muslim armies, were required to pay this protection tax instead. It was a per-person tax, not based on income or wealth. At times in history, exemptions had been made for the very young, the very old, and the very poor.<sup>14,15</sup> Daesh appointed Salman al-Farisi as the governor of Mosul, and charged him with collecting the taxes. He set the fee at 550,000 Iraqi dinar (about \$470).<sup>16</sup>

Those who could not afford the tax would be executed.<sup>17</sup> A contract (called a "dhimma") was made between the government and each Christian person willing to pay the tax.<sup>18</sup> This tax had been discontinued during the Ottoman reforms of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup>

The Daesh fighters sometimes demanded this themselves, but it was supposed to be paid through the authorities. In one case, Daesh militants entered a Christian home to seize the jizya, but finding nothing of value, they raped the two women present -- a mother and daughter -- in front of their husband/father, who was so traumatized that he committed suicide.<sup>20</sup>

On Monday, **June 21**, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Iyad Ameen Madani, condemned the act against innocent Christian Iraqi citizens in Mosul and Nineveh including forced deportation under the threat of execution: "This forced displacement is a crime that cannot be tolerated; and the practices of the Islamic State have nothing to do with Islam and its principles that call for justice, fairness, freedom of faith and coexistence."<sup>23</sup>

**June 21:** Daesh begins imposing a poll tax (jizya) on Assyrians in Mosul

At least one Christian family that had been in Al-Quosh returned to Mosul, survived at least for a while there, after Daesh had handed control of some neighborhoods to slightly less radical elements under their authority.<sup>32</sup>

June 23: Daesh Rape Christian Mother and Daughter, Kill 4 Christian Women for Not Wearing Veil (story).

June 25: Daesh limits water from the plants in Mosul to one hour per day. Residents in surrounding areas are forced to dig wells (story).

Some of the priests and nuns stayed behind to protect their buildings and repositories of ancient documents, at risk to themselves. On **June 29<sup>th</sup>**, Daesh kidnapped two nuns, ages about 40 and 60, three Christian orphans, including a 12-year-old boy, and two 20-year-old women.<sup>33</sup> On the same day, Daesh seized the Mosul properties of the Iraqi Chaldean Catholic archdiocese and occupied Mosul's Church of St. Ephrem. Twelve masked gunmen broke open the doors and took some small statues from inside the property and broke them outside. They took control of the premises and they placed their black banners on the roof and the entrance. They told neighbors, "This is our property, don't touch it."<sup>33</sup> Daesh released the nuns and orphans on July 14

Aseel Ameer Ablahad (28), and her husband Luay Joseph Yacoub (28), and daughter Noor Luay Yacoub (5), Dali (2) left Hadvah District for a second time on **June 30**. They lived near the church where the nuns were kidnapped. They had left on June 11<sup>th</sup>, but returned when their neighbors who had stayed behind in Mosul told them the city was safe. Daesh didn't search them as they left.

By **July 1**, 2014, Daesh had occupied the headquarters of the archdiocese in Mosul and destroyed all Christian symbols there. (Mosul archbishop: the Christian presence in Iraq is "in danger," help is needed, Staff Writer, AsiaNews.it, July 1, 2014).

**July 10:** Daesh bars women from walking the streets unless accompanied by a male. Nearly all barber shops and womens' salons are closed

Sabah Jameel Hanna (68) and Wahida Abdunoor Hanna (60) and three of their four married adult children left Mosul in three cars on **July 10<sup>th</sup>**, 2014. Sabah had been a prisoner of war in Iran for 13 years after serving as a soldier in the Iraqi Army. They were the last Christian family on their street to leave. They had periodically seen both Christians and Muslims lying dead in the streets from gunshot wounds periodically since 1959. They presumed the killers were local Muslims, trying to keep Christians lower in power. They lived on the more dangerous West side of the Tigris River in the Nebe District. They had been hearing gunfire from the Daesh invasion since the sixth of June, and it was getting worse. In early July, Daesh wrote the "N" for Nasara on their house, indicating it was had belonged to a Christian family and added a statement that it was now owned by the Islamic state. On July 8<sup>th</sup>, he was walking outside, and was warned not to go to a particular street where he wanted to look around, but he went anyway. He was shot in the arm, without seeing the attacker. He went directly to his home and his neighbor, a nurse, treated his wound, leaving him with a 3 inch scar and depression in his arm. Two days later, they took all their valuables and IDs with them in their car. They approached the checkpoint on the edge and



city and were told to get out of their cars. The three cars were in different lanes at the checkpoint. Daesh checked their bodies, using a female fighter to check the women. All their valuables were hidden on their bodies, and all of it was found when Daesh searched them, and confiscated, including Sabah's ID, but not Wahida's or those of their children. They were not pressured to convert, but were told if they didn't pay the tax, and stayed, they would kill them. They were passed through without further conversation. They were afraid to speak, for fear they would overreact and kill him. His Muslim neighbors called him to tell him that Daesh had broken the door of their house and moved inside to live. They had left crosses and Christian pictures in their house, which were taken out of the house by IS. They first went to Bashiqa, for one week, at his son's house, and then to Dohuk, to a rented apartment for 3 months, then in a Church seminary dormitory in Dohuk, before settling in Seje in a refugee camp for Christians in April. He has to pay for water and power every month for the caravan (number 26 inside Seje), shared with his wife and son Zaid, who is working as a taxi driver between the Kurdistan Region and Baghdad. But this road has been closed now, so he isn't working. Sabah needs advanced surgical treatment for his eyes, and is hoping for financial support for the operation.

Nail and Enam left Mosul again on Thursday, **July 10<sup>th</sup>**, again in their car, carrying their valuables. As they approached the checkpoint on the edge of the city, they were told to get out of their older model car, and they were searched, Nail by a man, and Enam by a woman. They had hidden their money inside their spare tire by deflating it, then inserting the materials and re-inflating it again, but Daesh found it and confiscated it. They were waved through without any discussion of conversion to Islam. Their daughter left the next day, on **Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>** and all her valuables were taken away from her as well.

They went to Teleskof and rented a house, and left in the mass exodus when Daesh invaded Teleskof. Then they went to Al Quosh and stayed for three days in an empty house that was provided by a Priest. From there they came to Seje, and rented a house there, where they had a family friend.

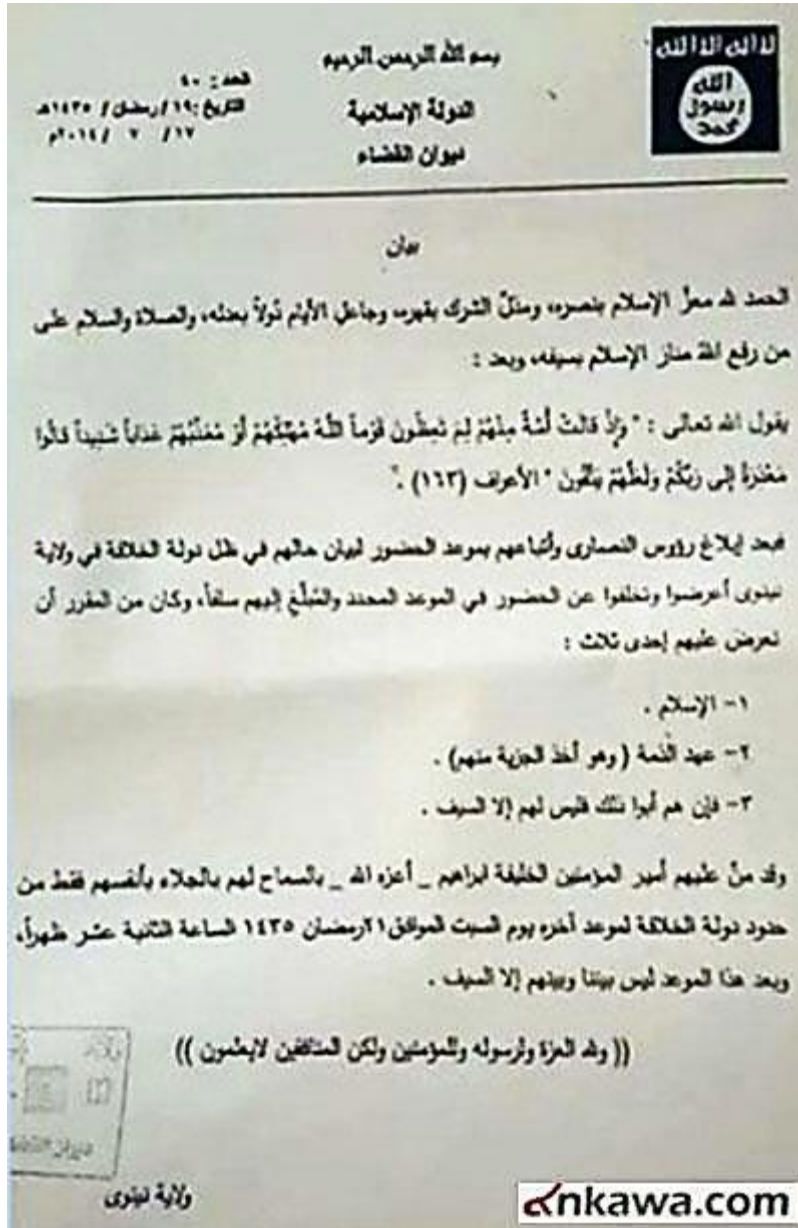
#### **July 15:** Daesh Stops Rations for Christians and Shiites in Mosul

Raid Yousif Essa (52) and his wife Rafea Abdulgani Ibrahim (40) and their two teenage daughters had left Mosul the first time on June 10<sup>th</sup>, reaching the checkpoint at dusk. They lived on the East side, where they were members of Mar Afram Church. Raid had seen and heard many explosions on the preceding days. Daesh was not yet controlling the checkpoint when they passed, and the Iraqi Army had already evacuated. They went to his Rafea's parents' home in Teleskof, who had evacuated earlier from Mosul. They stayed there until August 2014. In that time, Raid drove back into Mosul two times alone and a third time with his wife, going through the Daesh checkpoints. On July 16<sup>th</sup>, while in Mosul the third time, a Daesh leader in Mosul, Haji Mohammad (a Mosul Arab about 50 years old), called him by telephone at night, saying he should go with four other Christian men, representatives of the Christian community, to meet him at 7 am the next day a former palace of Sadaam Hussein, called "Mosul dar Theafa." The other Christian men who went with him were Duraid, Sammi, and Nashwan.

It was a short, 30 minute meeting. They were given the ultimatum that they should change their religion, pay the tax, or leave, or they would be killed. Haji Mohammad gave them his phone number so they could be in touch with him. The men were chosen because they were known by the Moslawi Daesh officers, and were thought to be courageous men who would not fear going to meet with Daesh. After the meeting, he immediately went home and packed up, and left the city with another Christian family. At the checkpoint, Daesh told them all to get out of the car. The men were checked by men and the women

by women. They lost all their belongings and a considerable amount of money. They moved back to Teleskof, and stayed there until Daesh invaded the city. They first went to Dohuk, to an apartment belonging to the church, where they stayed for 19 months. When the camp opened outside Ankawa, they moved to cabin 9 in Seje Village.

**July 17:** Daesh issues statement ordering Christians to convert or die (story).



<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=762523.0>

Many Christians remained in Mosul for a month under Daesh governance, even without the Iraqi Army there, until they were forced to leave. On morning of **Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>**, Daesh leaders asked senior members of the Christian community, including clerics, to meet with them and “expose themselves to the

Islamic State.” The Christian leaders were asked to go to the city’s Social and Cultural Club.<sup>13</sup> They discussed it among themselves and, as a group, the Christian leaders refused to go.

In response, Daesh moved on with their plan for Christians. They released a statement around **midnight July 17<sup>th</sup>**, saying that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi demanded that they leave by midnight, July 19<sup>th</sup> or die by beheading.<sup>21</sup> Paying the tax was no longer an option. The message was sent out from the loudspeakers of all the mosques around midnight, and a paper flier was distributed throughout the city. Throughout the next two days, Daesh evacuation orders for Christians peeled out on the loudspeakers of all the mosques in Mosul.

Talib Jameel Mammo (37) and his Parwin William Slewa (29), and their two sons Jameel (5), and John (3), were living on the West side of the Tigris River. On **July 17**, they heard Daesh talking on the loudspeakers. This continued for three days. They gave them two days to leave, by midnight on July 19. They left **on the 18<sup>th</sup>** at 10 am in their private 21-seater bus that belonged to his father on the advice of their church leaders. Only his parents came with them on the bus, and just their clothes. His Muslim neighbor advised them to stay longer, but they didn’t want to wait.

Daesh stopped them at the checkpoint and searched for gold and valuables. They told them to get off the bus, but his parents stayed on the bus. He had given the IDs to his mother. They didn’t have a female Daesh operative, and he wouldn’t allow them to search his mother’s body and clothes, so she was able to keep all their IDs safe. They were at the checkpoint for 45 minutes while Daesh searched through their belongings. One man told his father he could change his religion and stay. His father said no, he didn’t want to change his religion. They didn’t confiscate anything.

After he left, his house was marked with the Arabic N for “Christian” and “property of the Islamic State” according to his neighbors who spoke to him on the phone. The last word he had, one year after he left, was that his Muslim neighbor said Daesh tried to go into his house, but she had hidden all the Christian symbols, crosses, and pictures.

They drove to Al Quosh, their family village. They went to his uncle’s house and stayed there about 10 to 15 days. Then they moved to Seje, because his wife was from Seje, and they arranged in advance to rent a house. He went for two years without work, but sometimes works with his cousin repairing air conditioners.

Daesh told Christians they could only take the clothes they were wearing and no luggage, and that their homes would then belong to the Islamic State.<sup>21</sup> The statement was read over the loudspeakers from the mosques on Friday.<sup>18,21</sup> A printed statement was distributed to churches.<sup>22</sup>

One Christian man later reported that his Muslim neighbor came to his door at that point and said “Did you hear about the decree, the announcement is to leave in 24 hours by Allah's name, and if I see you here tomorrow I'm going to kill you because I have the right to take your home.”<sup>17</sup>

Ameer Ablahad Saman (59), and his wife Atemad Haseeb Salim (48) said Daesh cut the electricity and the food rations, which made their life difficult, and then they gave the 24 hour ultimatum and he left at noon on **July 17<sup>th</sup>**. They took a taxi, knowing that Daesh would steal their car if they took it to the checkpoint, leaving their car with their Muslim neighbor who promised to try to get the car out to them. As they left, they were stopped at the checkpoint and their money and valuables were taken. His wife was body

searched by a female Daesh operative, and her Atemad couldn't take her wedding ring off, as her fingers had swollen, so they said they would cut her finger to get it off. She worked harder and managed to get it off. They took him out of the taxi, and he told the taxi to go.

They put a gun to Ameer's head and told him that if he didn't change his religion, they would kill him. He said "if you kill me, it's better than changing my religion." At that point they passed him through the checkpoint on foot. A Muslim man from Mosul tried to help them, and Daesh told the man they would kill him or take his car. So the man told them to walk farther, out of sight, and the Muslim man took them to Tel Kef. He stayed there for three days, until his son in law brought them to Seje. A Muslim neighbor brought his car out to Tel Kef to give it to them.

Basil Nasser Yacop (61) and his wife Sanaa Abdulkarim Musa (50) and their three daughters and a son left Mosul at 9:30 am July 19, 2014 before the noon deadline. They were members of the Bashara Church in Mosul. They met Daesh at the Arab District on the East side at the checkpoint. They took the older of their two cars, with their gold, money but not their IDs. She tried to fight with them about her gold, but they held her 11-year-old son by the arm, and threatened to take him if she didn't give up the gold readily. They let her continue on in her car because it was older. She left her newer car with her Muslim car but later said someone took it. She figures that he sold it for cash and kept the money. She heard that Daesh entered her house and locked it up, but later brought a family from another country to live there. They went to a church apartment in Dohuk, and nineteen months later, came to a caravan (number 33) in Seje Village.

Muneer Ibrahim Fatoohi (55) and his wife Mahnal Fathil Ibrahim (51) also left Mosul on July 17th with their two sons and a daughter when the ultimatum was delivered to all the Christians. They left with only their clothes. He had his wife wear a hijab, and they passed easily through the DAESH checkpoint, as Daesh thought they were Muslim. When he left his house in Mosul, he locked it. Two months after he left, IS put more locks on the house, but didn't mark it with the N they were putting on other Christian houses. Two months, later, IS took all the furnishings out. His Muslim neighbor called two days ago to say that a Tunisian-German who had joined Daesh was living in the second floor. A Turkish Daesh fighter was living downstairs.

On **July 18, 2014** Daesh in Mosul marked Christian homes with the Arabic letter "N" (for the word Nasrani, which means Christian) That same day, Daesh was reported to have burned the **Syrian Catholic Diocese** in the Maidan Neighborhood of Central Mosul to the ground, although this has not been confirmed (Daesh torches 1,200 year-old Mosul church, ethnically cleanses Christians, Kurt Nimmo, Infowars, July 22, 2014)

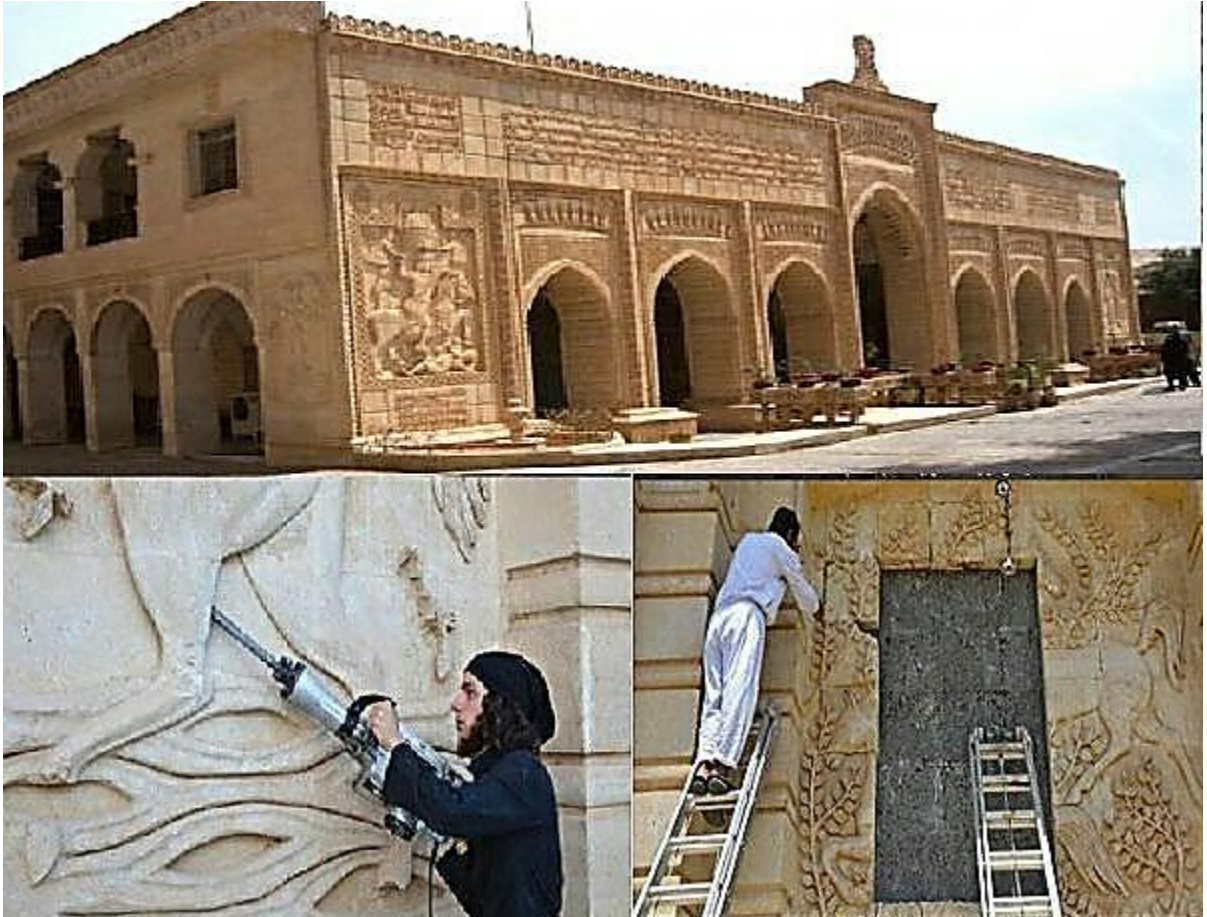


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<http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-mosul-iraq-church-of-al-tahira-the-immaculate-syrian-catholic-church-29286353.html>

On the evening of **July 19, 2014**, Daesh took control of the convent. (The Eastern Christian Churches Today, P. Manuel, October 1, 2014, Speech in Barcelona, Spain.) Sometime later, the church was used as a Daesh jail for women. (Churches in Mosul are used as prisons by jihadist of the Caliphate, Staff Writer, Fides, December 2, 2014). Daesh then demolished the monastery in 2014<sup>24</sup>

On the evening of Sunday, **July 20, 2014**, IS took control of St. Benjamin monastery and forced the monks to leave on foot, taking nothing with them, so they evacuated to Qaraqush. **St. Benjamin Monastery (Mar Behnam)** is located twenty miles south-east of Mosul and four miles from the Ancient Assyrian city of Calah (Nimrud) between the Tigris river and the Upper Zab River, adjacent to the Khuder Elias Village, near Qaraqush. Beside the monastery, is the famous man-made cave, believed to have been dug during Assyrian times, containing the graves of St. Behnam and his sister Sarah, who were killed by their father, a king, after their conversion to Christianity. It was built in the fourth century and expanded in the twelfth or thirteenth century. Behnam was a prince who was killed by the Sassanians, perhaps during the fourth century. (The Eastern Christian Churches Today, P. Manuel, October 1, 2014, Speech in Barcelona, Spain.) (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016)



[http://thecopticnews.blogspot.com/2015/08/blog-post\\_91.html?m=0](http://thecopticnews.blogspot.com/2015/08/blog-post_91.html?m=0)

Those Christians who did not leave Mosul by the Saturday deadline were taken to mosques and told they should convert to Islam. Some refused, so Daesh took their houses and money and forced them to leave.<sup>19</sup> An elderly Christian woman who had stayed behind refused to convert and was forced to leave.<sup>25</sup> Only about 200 Christians were left in Mosul at that point.<sup>28</sup>

Issah Al Qurain was one of those taken to the mosque and told to convert. In the beginning, he refused.

“I told them I was Christian and I had my religion and they had their religion. But they told me, if you don't convert, we will kill you and take your wife and children.”<sup>24</sup>

In the time they gave him to think about it, he and his family were able to escape.

A few Christians were reported to have pretended to convert to Islam in order to save their families' lives and their property. They were required to go to a mosque, perform a ritual *shahada*, and received a document stating they were Muslim. Then they had to appear every Friday in the mosque for prayers at noon.<sup>25-26</sup> One family went through this process only to flee the next morning, after which they talked with a priest about how to recant their conversion to Islam.<sup>27</sup>

Many who had no transportation struggled to find rides out of the city.<sup>29</sup> Those who left were intimately strip-searched and all gold, money, and other objects of value, were taken from them and they were sent out on foot with nothing but the clothes on their backs.<sup>30</sup>

The women were taken out of their car and ushered into a nearby trailer by a female Daesh member dressed in full hijab. Its interior was barren, but for a small bed in the corner which was covered in a continually replenished mountain of money, gold, and jewelry. The female Daesh agent searched the women, finding money in their bags and hidden within Raida's clothes. She took it all from them. Next she removed their earrings one by one, placing them in the pile on the bed. She tried to take off Ruwayda's bracelets, but they got caught on her arm. Eventually the agent was able to yank them off, injuring Ruwayda in the process, and she added them to the growing pile. "We asked them for 10,000 or 100,000 [Iraqi Dinars -- about \$8.50 or \$85.00] just to take a taxi, or for pocket money," Raida recalled. "And she refused that." Once finished, an Daesh fighter who had been standing guard outside the trailer came inside and picked up all the loot, loading it into a car to take it back to Mosul.<sup>31</sup>

Deprived of their cars, they were forced to walk to safety.<sup>19</sup>

At least one Christian youth was kidnapped and forcibly conscripted into Daesh forces.<sup>27</sup>

They told his family if you don't go right now and leave him, we will kill you all...They had to leave him behind.

Orders were given to kill any remaining Christians who had not converted, and a house to house extermination process was launched. One of the last to leave was an elderly man who was expelled at 11 am on Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>31</sup>

Yacub, 70, was one of the few Christians remaining beyond last Saturday's noon deadline. Samer Kamil Yacub was alone when four Islamist militants carrying AK-47s arrived at his front door and ordered him to leave the city. The 70-year-old Christian had failed to comply with a decree issued by ISHe may have even been the last to leave alive. "[A] fighter said, 'I have orders to kill you now'," Yacub said just hours after the Sunni extremists tried to force their way into his home at 11 a.m. on Monday. "All of the people in my neighborhood were Muslim. They came to help me —about 20 people — at the door in front of my house. They tried to convince Daesh not to kill me." The rebels spared Yacub but threw him out of the city where he had spent his entire life. They also took his Iraqi ID card before informing him that elderly women would be given his house.

A few were so worn down that they capitulated to the Muslim demands and started living as Muslims.

"I'm staying. I already feel dead," Fadi, a teacher, said on Saturday, moments before the midday deadline ran out.

"Only my soul remains, and if they want to take that I don't have a problem," he added.<sup>19</sup>

Christians fled the city in all directions. Ankawa, a Christian suburb of the capital Erbil, swelled with the displaced, though it was an expensive area and housing was already tight there. Those who could afford to rented apartments, and those who could not camped in unfinished buildings or stayed in camps run by churches. Some stayed on roofs of buildings trying to shelter themselves from the sun. One thousand metal trailers, arranged in a grid structure on a gravel expanse, house about 5,500 people just outside Ankawa. About 500 families moved to the Christian village of Seje, near Dohuk in homes abandoned by other Christians fleeing abroad, or in one of two camps that were built to house them there. By Tuesday, June 22, between 200 and 250 families had arrived in Qaraqosh, nearer Erbil, though they would soon have to flee from there too. Around 750 families fled Mosul for Hamdaniyah, but they too had to flee further away when Daesh arrived there days later. Others had gone further into the safety of the Kurdistan Region in places like Diana.<sup>23</sup>

Sheikh Khalid Al Mulla, head of the Iraqi Scholars Association and a prominent Sunni, accused Daesh of “falsely wearing the dress of Islam to displace the Christian brothers who live with us for thousands of years.”<sup>23</sup> An estimated 500,000 civilians from all ethnic and religious groups were displaced from Mosul during the Daesh invasion.

With the Sunni stronghold of Mosul under their control, Daesh moved rapidly to expand that control in the areas surrounding the city in June 2014, including the mixed-religion town Talafer. The Kurdish Peshmerga held Telafer for two days when Daesh invaded in mid-June, but then pulled back and gave them the town. As in other towns, some of the people stayed behind to protect their properties.

On **July 22**, about 25 Christians were paying the tax so they could remain in Mosul, as they had businesses and homes in Mosul they didn't want to leave behind.<sup>34</sup>

All Christian women who remained would have to wear the full burqa and no Western style clothes.<sup>35</sup>

On **July 25**: Daesh destroyed the 3,000 year old tomb of the Prophet Jonah

**On August 2<sup>nd</sup>**, Daesh looted 8 million dollars from Assyrian farms, mostly in the form of farming equipment.

Days passed, with Daesh cleaning up the two towns of their few remaining residents as they had Mosul, the Sunni Arabs living there joining with them in their campaign to root out all religious minorities. Then **August 3<sup>rd</sup>** and following days, Daesh used Talafar for genocidal processing of thousands of Yezidis they captured from their villages throughout the nearby remote Sinjar Mountain area. They herded their captives into school buildings, separated out the males with hair on their faces who refused to convert for mass executions or sent them off to Mosul and Raqqa for conversion to Islam and training in fighting. Then they separated out the older women to bury them alive, and carted off the younger women to be sold as sex slaves in Mosul and Raqqa with their small children in tow. Yezidi girls as young as ten would be forced into sexual slavery, and over time, as the younger girls matured, they too would become sex slaves, while the maturing Yezidi boys would be sent off for military training as they reached the age of 10. The Yezidis who converted to Islam were placed in abandoned houses in the two towns and incorporated into the Muslim community.

**On August 18** Daesh forcefully circumcised Assyrian Christian men in Mosul



**August 21:** Daesh loots Assyrian homes, vandalizes churches in Mosul

In late August, General Gharawi was charged by the Defense Ministry with dereliction of duty. He is now awaiting the findings of an investigative panel and then a military trial. If found guilty, he could be sentenced to death. Four federal police officers who served under Gharawi are also in custody awaiting trial, and could not be reached. Parliament also plans to hold hearings into the loss of Mosul. (Iraqi general disputes Baghdad's version of events that led to fall of Mosul, Ned Parker, Isabel Coles, Raheem Salman, The Daily Star, October 15, 2014)

**St. Elijah (Mar Elia) Monastery** was completely demolished between August and September 2014, two to three months after Daesh captured Mosul. (Iraq's oldest Christian monastery destroyed by Islamic State, Staff Writer, BBC News, January 20, 2016). It was located 4 miles south-west of Mosul. The monastery was founded around 595 AD by Mar Elia, an Assyrian monk. Mar Elia was a student of the famous Nisibin who entered the monastic life at the great monastery at the Ezla Mountain in Turkey. He became a student of Mar Orahim who established the bylaws of the monastery in 571A.D. Mar Elia established the monastery during the reign of the Persian King Hurmizd IV before 595 AD. (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016). The entrance is made up of large stone arch which remains from the original church. The main sanctuary of the monastery was built in the 11th century, and it was renovated in the 17th century. In 1743, the Persian leader Tahmaz Nadir Shah damaged the monastery and killed the 150 monks who lived there, after they refused to convert to Islam. The monastery lay in ruins until the beginning of the 20th century, when some restoration was completed on a few halls and rooms. It was not in use, other than for annual pilgrimages. It has the famous Al-Sahl water spring which is fit for drinking.



<http://www.chaldeansonline.org/iraq/syriac.htm>



In **September, 2014**, Daesh started using Christian houses to make bombs to kill more Christians, finding in that act a certain twisted mock poetic justice. Daesh started using a Christian home in the Hadbaa neighborhood for manufacturing IEDs. A neighbor reported seeing them on a daily basis as they bring welding machines to the house and install various extensions to cars. Another resident said that many Daesh terrorists were using a house belonging to a Christian who used to work in the Nineveh Province as their headquarters, engaging in welding and blacksmith projects. He saw many cars that

coming and going, including pickup trucks full of mortar rounds and explosives with exposed wires. (Daesh Using Christian Homes in Mosul as Factories for Explosive Devices, Staff Writer, AINA, September 16, 2014)

On **November 5, 2014**, al-Baghdadi sent a message to al-Qaeda Emir al-Zawahiri requesting that he swear allegiance to him as caliph, in return for a position in ISIL. Tables had turned, in al-Baghdadi's mind, and he sought to eclipse al-Qaeda under his own shadow. Al-Zawahiri did not reply, and instead reassured the Taliban of his loyalty to Mullah Omar. (ISIS vs. the Taliban: The Battle for Hearts and Minds, Sami Yousafzai and Sam Seibert, Vocativ, November 5, 2014.)

St Simon Peter's Church (Mar Shimon/Shamoun alSafa), is located in the Mayassa neighborhood of Mosul. The old church floor lies five meters below the street level. It was the Convent of the Chaldean Nuns of the Sacred Heart. On Monday, **November 24, 2014**, Daesh bombed and severely damaged the Convent (Churches in Mosul are used as prisons by jihadist of the Caliphate, Staff Writer, Fides, December 2, 2014).

The Church of the Immaculate is located in the Shifaa neighborhood of East Mosul. In **late November, 2014**, Daesh was using the Church as a jail. (Churches in Mosul are used as prisons by jihadist of the Caliphate, Staff Writer, Fides, December 2, 2014).

St. George (Mar Gorgees) Church, Monastery and Cemetery was located six miles north-east of Mosul, on the east side of the river Tigris, four miles from Telkef. Built before the tenth century, it comprised a large church and a second smaller church built in 1924. (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016). On **December 23, 2014** Daesh destroyed the front (west) wall of the monastery to remove the big built-in cross. A cemetery adjacent to the church, where many Iraqi Christian soldiers killed in the Iraq-Iran war were buried, was also destroyed. (Islamic State blows up façade of ancient Mosul Chaldean monastery, Miko Morelos, Ankawa.com, March 14, 2015)



<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=770841.0>



<http://www.ishtartv.com/viewarticle,59789.html>

The Church of the Virgin Mary was located in the Wihda neighborhood, in the Arabic District of North Mosul. Daesh cleared the Church of its contents and totally demolished it on Christmas Day, **December 25, 2014** (Daesh blows up Catholic Church in Mosul, Staff Writer, Rudaw, December 26, 2014.)

**On March 7, 2015** a statue of Mary and Jesus defaced.

On **April 16, 2015**, Daesh went on a campaign to shatter Christian graves with sledgehammers and carve out the crosses that were engraved on the stones. The photos were released by Daesh along with a statement that any grave higher than ground level must be shattered. Any images on such graves were to be erased as well. (Nothing sacred: Daesh destroys Christian grave sites in Mosul, Perry Chiarmonte, Fox News, April 16, 2015).





In **June 2015**, Daesh they looted the Church of the Immaculate Virgin at the corner of Nineveh Street and Al Shaziani Street in the Maidan Neighborhood, Mosul. They destroyed the famous clock tower in and decapitated the statue of Mary that had topped the clock tower. (IS Blows up Ancient 'Clock Church' in Mosul, Staff Writer, Bass News, April 26, 2016) (Archbishop of Mosul: reports of destruction of Church of the Immaculate Virgin untrue, Joseph Mahmoud, AsiaNews.it, July 2, 2015).

St. Ephraim (Mar Aprim/Ephram) Church was located in the Al Shurta/Al Maidan neighborhood, in the western Jadida (New Mosul) district, on the east side of central Mosul, overlooking the Tigris River. It had a large cross on the outer wall built into the building, which made it a target for Daesh in their attempt to remove religious symbols. On **July 13, 2015** Daesh converted the church to a mosque, which it named Abu Abdul Rahman al-Bilaoi. Daesh removed the cross on the tower and painted the tower black. (General Information about Mosul City, Staff Writer, Iraq Institution for Development, August 29, 2015). It was used for slaughtering animals during the 2015 Bakr-Eid, the Islamic Festival of Sacrifice). (Mosul churches being used as slaughterhouses by DAESH, Carey Lodge, Christian Today, October 5, 2015) (Op-Ed: London is like Mosul: Christians have Vanished, Giulio Meotti, Arutz Sheva, June 15, 2015) St. Ephraim (Ephrem).

The Mother of Aid Church (Kanisa Om al-Maona) was located in Dawasa Neighborhood of Central Mosul. It was an ancient church. On the Monday before **July 7, 2015**, Daesh was reported to have demolished the church, accidentally killing four bystanders, but this has not been confirmed. (4 killed as Daesh destroys another Mosul church, Staff Writer, Rudaw, July 7, 2015).



<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=558889.0>

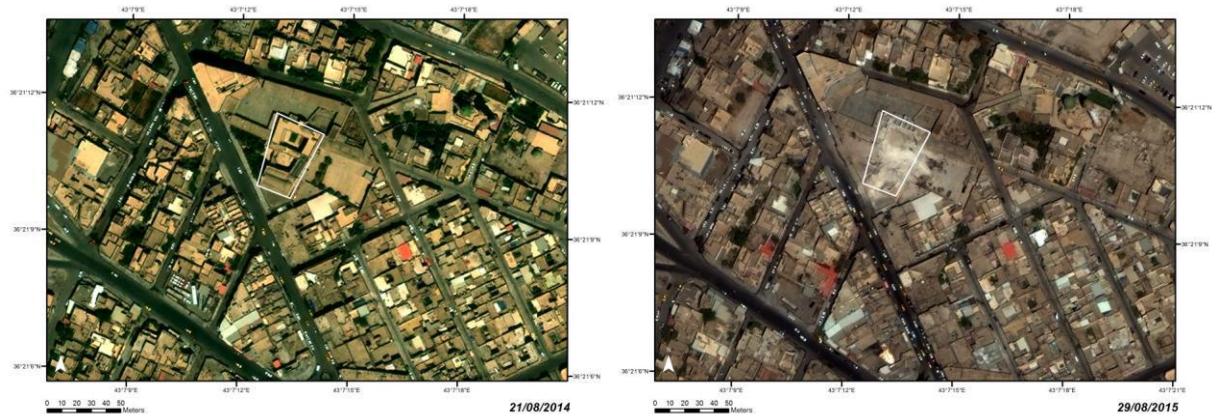


<http://www.mulhak.com/%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4-%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%84/>

The Church of the Immaculate Virgin (Our Lady of Purity; al-Gahera/al-Tahra/al-Tahira/al-Tahra al-Fawqaniyya) was completely demolished sometime before **August 29, 2015**. The church was first built in Mosul about 300 AD. It was the most ancient Christian church in Mosul. It had already been destroyed in past centuries and was reconstructed in 1743. The church lies 3 meters below street level. On December 7, 2004 the church was bombed by terrorists wounding three people and destroying most of it. Many people were injured. On January 17, 2008 a car bomb outside the church injured two people. On December 15, 2009 another bomb placed outside the building caused a major explosion. Four people were killed and 40 were injured. The church was badly damaged.

[\(http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi\\_christians\\_fear\\_more\\_attacks\\_after\\_two\\_church\\_bombings\\_in\\_mosul/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi_christians_fear_more_attacks_after_two_church_bombings_in_mosul/) Accessed May 20, 2016)





On Saturday, **January 16, 2016**, Daesh began auctioned off properties belonging to Christians in Mosul. In total, 400 homes, 167 shops and 19 apartment buildings were shown and sold at low prices. The police force announced the sale by driving through the streets with megaphones. They used Islamic State property deeds and not the original deeds of the owners. More than 400 houses were shown at auction. The most prominent items were 19 residential buildings as well as 167 stores and storage units formerly owned by Christians. Most of the people who bought property in the auction were Syrians who had come to Mosul after the border between Syria and Iraq was opened. Umm Alaa said while crying, she came to the auction to buy her neighbor's house because she promised her that she would buy it from Daesh and return it on her neighbor's arrival back in Mosul. "I know how much my neighbor Umm Wa'el suffered because she has four children," she said. The Iraqi Ministry of Justice published a decision declaring all such transactions null and void, so that Christians in Mosul are still the legal owners of their houses in the eyes of the Iraqi state. (Islamic State Auctions Property of Christians Who Fled Mosul, Staff Writer, The Clarion Project, January 17, 2016)

On the Monday before **February 1, 2016**, Daesh members robbed and then blew up ten houses belonging to the displaced Christians using improvised explosive devices in al-Maidan neighborhood north of Mosul, causing the houses to collapse completely. (Daesh blows up ten Christian houses north of Mosul, Abdelhak Mamoun, Iraqi News, February 1, 2016)

The Church of the Immaculate Virgin was located at the corner of Nineveh Street and Al Shaziani Street in the Maidan Neighborhood, Mosul. The original church on that location dated to the eighth century AD. The new building was started in 1862 and inaugurated in 1873. The famous clock tower was added in 1882 by the wife of Emperor Napoleon III, Empress Eugenie of France, as a reward for the Dominican friars' attempts to end a typhoid outbreak in Mosul. Terrorists bombed part of the outer wall in 2006. Then they looted the church and destroyed the famous clock tower in June 2015 and decapitated the statue of Mary that had topped the clock tower. Finally, on **April 25, 2016**, IS was reported to have demolished the entire building using explosives, though this has not yet been confirmed. (Islamic State destroys Mosul's historic Christian Clock Church, Andrew V. Pestano, UPI, April 26, 2016) (Islamic State Demolishes Iconic 'Clock Church' in Mosul, Thomas D. Williams, Breitbart, April 26, 2016) (IS Blows up Ancient 'Clock Church' in Mosul, Staff Writer, Bass News, April 26, 2016) (Archbishop of Mosul: reports of destruction of Church of the Immaculate Virgin untrue, Joseph Mahmoud, AsiaNews.it, July 2, 2015).



Wikimedia

On **May 9, 2016**, it was reported that a number of Christian families remained inside Mosul without converting to Islam, and they annually paid Daesh \$170 per year. Daesh paid each family \$200 per month. (Christian Families in Mosul Pay Daesh to Allow Them to Stay, Staff Writer, BAS News, May 9, 2016)

There were many other churches in Mosul still on the list for demolition or repurposing in May, 2016:

The New Church of the Immaculate (Kanisa al Adraa al Jadida) in the Maidan neighborhood of Mosul

Our Lady of Deliverance Chapel in the Shifaa neighborhood of Mosul

The House of the Young Sisters of Jesus in the Ras Al-Kour neighborhood of Mosul

Archbishop's Palace Chapel in the Dawasa neighborhood of Mosul

Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese in the Shurta neighborhood of Mosul

St. Hodeeni Church (Mar Hudeni) in the Bab Al-Jadeed neighborhood of Mosul. The Church was named after St. Ahudemme (Hudeni) Maphrian of Tikrit who was martyred in 575. It dates back to the 10th century and lies seven meters below street level. First reconstructed in 1970, people take mineral water from the well in its yard.

St. Thomas Church (Mar Toma) and cemetery in the Khazraj neighborhood, 100 meters west of the corner of Al Shaziani and Nineveh Streets, in Mosul. It was built before 770 AD (as it is mentioned that year in a document) on the site where Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus, was thought to have lived while preaching in the area in the first century. The facility was looted by Daesh after the doors were broken.

The Diocese of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Noor neighborhood of Mosul

The Assyrian Church of the East in the Dawasa neighborhood of Mosul

St. Buthyoon's Church (Mar Buthyoon) in the Shahar al-Souq neighborhood of Mosul

St. Ephraim's Church (Mar Ephrem) in the Wady al-Ain neighborhood of Mosul

Church of the Virgin Mary in the Drakziliya neighborhood of Mosul

St. Isaiah's Church and Cemetery in the Ras al-Kour neighborhood of Mosul

Monastery of Al-Nasir (Victory) in the al-Arabiya neighborhood of Mosul

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the Mayassa neighborhood of Mosul

Mar Soma, in Mosul, established in 1840, thought to be the oldest protestant church in the middle-east

The Church and Monastery of the Dominican Fathers and Convent of Katrina Siena in the Sa'a Neighborhood of Mosul

The House of the Apostolic Aim (Qasada al-Rasouliya) in Mosul

The Christian Cemetery in the Ekab Valley of Mosul which contains a small chapel

The Chaldean Diocese in the Shurta neighborhood of Mosul

The Miskinta Church (Kanisa Miskinta) in the Mayassa neighborhood of Mosul

St. Michael Monastery (Dar Mar Mikhael) is located 4 miles north-west of Mosul near the Tigris River neighboring several villages. According to tradition, the monastery was established in mid fourth century AD by St. Michael, a student of St. Ogin. The monastery is divided into two sections; the internal quarters and the external quarters. The internal quarters comprise 20 rooms and 8 halls on the first level. The second level has additional rooms overlooking the beautiful monastery gardens adjacent to the Tigris River. The

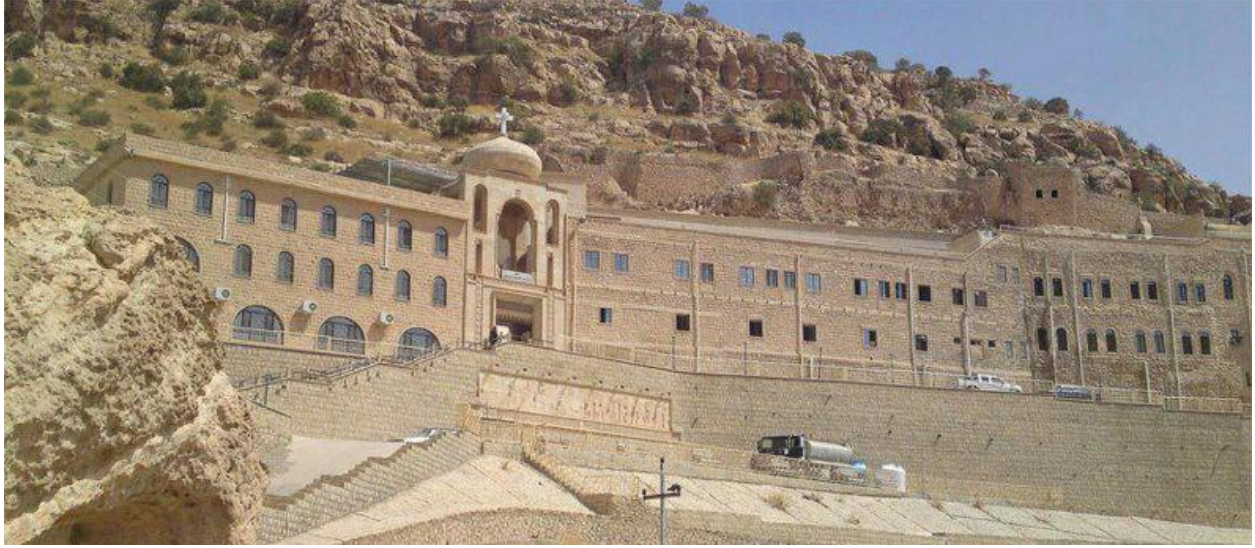
external quarters is where the main monastery church is located as well as six additional rooms. It was re-built, or renovated, in 1867. (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016)

St. Petion Church (Mar Petion), the first Chaldean Church in Mosul, dates back to the 10th Century. The Church was named after a martyr of the same name who was educated by his cousin in a monastery and died in 446. It dates back prior to the 10th century and lies 3 meters below street level. The church suffered destruction and it was reconstructed many times. A hall was built on one of its three parts in 1942. As a result, most of its artistic features were lost. (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016)

St. Abraham Monastery (Dayra d'Mar Orah) is located North-East of Batnaya village, twenty miles north of Mosul. It was built between 581 and 596 AD and occupied by monks until 1719. The monastery was completely destroyed and its monks were killed at the hands of Iranian leader Nadir Shah in 1743. It was rebuilt in 1921. The monastery includes one large rectangular building 33 meters long and 26 meters wide. The building is surrounded by stones of marble and lapis lazuli meticulously carved with various Christian and ancient motifs. (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016)

#### Armenian Church in the Maidan neighborhood of Mosul

St. Matthew Monastery (Dair Mar Matti) and church, is located 20 miles north-east of Mosul on Mount Alfaf/Magloub. It was built by St. Matthew, a monk who fled with several other monks in 362 AD from the Monastery of Zuknin (Diyar Bakir) Turkey during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate. The monastery became a well-known learning center from the seventh century until the twelfth century, when many of its monks had to flee during the Salah al-Deen battles. The monastery returned to its past splendor in the thirteenth century until its partial destruction by Taimorlang, the Mongol. The monastery remained abandoned until 1795 AD when it was renovated and walls were added to the periphery. In 1845, additional wings were added. A new wing was built in recent years to serve Christians fleeing Mosul and Baghdad. To the left of the monastery is a large cave with natural mountain spring water dripping from the ceiling of the cave. The monastery has over 50 rooms, three halls for gathering, a church, and a mausoleum (Assyrian Monasteries in Present Day Iraq, Staff Writer, <http://aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>, accessed May 30, 2016).



<http://mosul-photos.com/picture.php?/2275>

## Chapter 5: Seizing Christian Assets

**Stealing private homes and businesses worth \$12.5 trillion** – Daesh scared off more than two million people in 500,000 families in Iraq and Syria, and killed thousands more – Christians, Shia Muslims, Yezidis, and all other religious minorities lost their homes. In Iraq and eastern Syria, people don't have mortgages on their homes. They own them outright. Daesh simply paints their name on the front of the house, threatens to kill anyone who tries to take it away from them, makes their own deeds from scratch, and sell the homes at auction on the cheap. Let's say the average home netted them \$25,000, and they confiscated half a million homes, that's \$12.5 trillion. About 100,000 of those homes, which they could sell for \$2.5 billion, came from Christians. Sunni Muslim men are bargain hunting these days, sinking the cash they were hiding in their homes into properties worth 5 to 10 times what they pay for them. No one knows how many Saudis and other foreign national Sunnis are picking up bargains in cities like Mosul and Raqqa. The risk of losing them is there, if the Coalition forces overtake Daesh strongholds, as the Iraqi government has already declared all such Daesh deeds null and void, but at the low prices Sunnis are paying for properties, they can afford some risk.

**Stealing private cars, gold, furniture, and cash worth \$1 trillion** - People who were late to leave their homes after Daesh came gave all their gold, cash, cars, and other personal valuables to Daesh at gunpoint. Even a low estimate of \$5,000 in assets per person, for 200,000 people fleeing, would yield a trillion dollars. Iraq has a law prohibiting the importation of used cars, so most of the cars are virtually new or only slightly used.

**Raiding Museums and Historic Sites for Antiquities worth \$50 billion**– The Mosul Museum was one of the richest in the world, with the world's oldest, and some of the finest, antiquities. Soon after Daesh entered Mosul, those items were looted and began showing up on the black markets. There are statues, reliefs, documents, and other treasures up to 4,000 years old in their hands. Sure they smashed a few things they didn't like, rather than taking the money from selling them (they have standards after all), but the windfall from this was huge, not to mention the treasures known to be buried in the sand in ancient sites, just waiting to be dug up.

**Seizing specially modified U.S. Humvees worth \$1.331 billion** - IS seized about 2,300 Humvees the U.S. trusted to Iraqi soldiers who left them behind when they ran away from the battle in Mosul. These are specially modified armored Humvees, not the usual garden variety. (Daesh is turning US Humvees into Iraq's worst nightmare, Jeremy Bender, Business Insider, June 5, 2015). These Humvees cost the U.S. \$579 million per thousand vehicles. That's \$1.331 billion for 2,300 Humvees. (Daesh captured 2,300 Humvee armoured vehicles from Iraqi forces in Mosul, Staff Writer, The Guardian, June 1, 2015.)



(Flow of Muslim Fighters into Iraq, Syria Unrelenting, “Alarming” as Daesh broadens its weaponry, Pamela Geller, Personal Blog, January 13, 2016/ <http://9502-presscdn-0-95.pagely.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Daesh-humvees.jpeg>)

**Demanding taxes worth \$1.152 billion** – The estimated tax income for Daesh was \$48 million per month for the two-year period starting in June 2014. If you don’t pay, they can, well, kill you. That’s a strong enforcement policy, much stronger than the US IRS has.

**Seizing bank assets worth 1 billion dollars** – Daesh was thought to have looted \$429 million from Mosul's central bank, and millions more from numerous banks across Mosul, Raqqa and other cities, estimated at a billion dollars. They may have lost a couple of hundred million in cash when the US bombed one of their banks, but they will find ways to make up that shortfall quickly enough (Mosul Seized: Jihadis Loot \$429m from City's Central Bank to Make Daesh World's Richest Terror Force, Jack Moore, International Business Times, June 11, 2014)

**Seizing oil revenues of \$960 million** – The annual Daesh oil revenues are estimated at \$480 million per year. They simply wholesale the oil on the existing black market into Turkey, and minimize any need to make sales themselves. But that income went down by about half when the US and its coalition partners began bombing the trucks carrying the oil bought from Daesh on its way into Turkey and Syria and oil prices dropped worldwide. The Syrian Government is buying all the oil it can get from Daesh at cheap prices, with a knife to its throat, since Daesh took over many of its oil wells.

**Starting off with \$875 million** - Even before Daesh went on its land-grab in 2014 it probably had assets worth \$875 million, according to a study by the Rand Corporation. Much of that came through extortion,

or was donated from al-Qaeda or Sunni Muslims abroad, especially Saudis. (Is Daesh going broke? Tim Lister, CNN, March 9, 2016.)

**Selling sex slaves or demanding ransom payments of \$40 million** – Estimates of the number of persons they kidnapped, and what they can get for them in selling them as slaves or ransoming them back to their families, vary widely. From what I'm seeing in Mosul and Raqqa, \$2,500 buys one person, or a mother with some small children. They are holding up to 2,000 Yezidis and a smaller number of Christians now, and slowly selling them. The Rand study puts their potential income at \$40 million for ransoms alone. Sunni Muslim men are buying up Yezidi girls as fast as they enter the markets, and often selling them for more than they pay for them, once they "break them."

**These big numbers add up quickly to \$13.555 trillion just in two years.** That doesn't count such things as sales of phosphates and other natural materials. Daesh expenses are lower than what the Iraqi and Syrian governments were paying to administer the areas they took, because they are reserving medical care for their own people six out of seven days per week, they don't keep up the infrastructure maintenance, utilities provided are minimal, and they aren't investing in the future. They should be able to continue quite a while on funding of these astronomical proportions, particularly if they tap into the oil under their feet and are able to bring it up.



# Chapter 7: Invading the Christian Stronghold

The major Christian town in the Nineveh Plains region, al-Hamdaniya District, was called Baghdede in Assyrian and Qaraqosh (Black Bird) in Turkish. Before the invasion, it had 45,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, 97 percent of them Christians. It lies about 20 kilometers southeast of Mosul. The area is claimed by both Arabs and Kurds, its fate to be decided by a referendum, according to the Iraqi Constitution, though the referendum has been delayed for years by the Baghdad government.

Between 2003 and 2012, about 7,000 Christians fleeing Mosul and Baghdad entered Qaraqosh.

The Iraqi Army abandoned its forward posts about 15 kilometers from Qaraqosh after the fall of Mosul around **June 10**, 2014, (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014), leaving the city in the hands of the 20-25 Kurdish Peshmerga who were located at two checkpoints on the edge of the town, (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014).

The Arabs of Hymera and other surrounding areas armed themselves and joined with Daesh in the fight. (Islamic State in Iraq Part of Larger Sunni Insurgency; Assyrians, Minorities Need Safe Haven, Staff Writer, Coston's Complaint, August 4, 2014)

The Arabs cut the water pipes and power lines to the city to wear the residents down. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014)

At first, DAESH, stationed near the city, pledged not to attack it. Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako went to Qaraqosh in person to convince the people of the goodwill of IS. (Saving Qaraqosh, a Christian town torn between Kurds and DAESH, Fady Noun, AsiaNews.it, June 27, 2014).

Daesh sent spies into the city to examine the situation, and they were not detected, even though they yelled crude insults at women, something a Christian would not do (Christians on the edge of extinction, Ellen Vaughn, February 21, 2015).

Christians who were fleeing Mosul called to warn Qaraqosh residents that Daesh was invading, and about half the residents fled to Erbil. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of Daesh, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014)

Syrian Catholic Archbishop Mar Youhana Boutros Moshe attempted to negotiate with Daesh and the Kurds to convince them to leave the city, but the negotiations failed. Daesh was set to storm the city. (50,000 Assyrians Flee Fighting in North Iraq, Staff Writer, AINA News, June 26, 2014)

Those who stayed behind barricaded themselves inside their homes. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014)

The Kurdish Peshmerga came on **June 10th** with 1500 heavily armed soldiers and positioned themselves on the east side of Qaraqosh. Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014.

The Arab Tribesmen stationed themselves on the west and south side, near the villages of Tawajna and Qurtaba-Arab and south of Balawat and began shelling Qaraqosh. (50,000 Assyrians Flee Fighting in North Iraq, Staff Writer, AINA News, June 26, 2014)

The Sunni Arab tribesmen called other armed Arab tribes in nearby Mosul for support, as well as Daesh fighters. The fighting escalated into an artillery battle. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014)

On **June 20**, Daesh cut the water supply to the city. Saving Qaraqosh, a Christian town torn between Kurds and DAESH, Fady Noun, AsiaNews.it, June 27, 2014)

The Kurdish Peshmerga increased around the check point area south west of the town on Tuesday, **June 24**. They were digging trenches in the area for several days with the help of bulldozers.

Sometime during Wednesday, **June 25th**, the Kurds ordered all soldiers manning the check point to leave the area. Clashes broke out sometime around midday when the bulldozers entered lands belonging to a Sunni Arab village. This provoked the villagers and led to armed clashes between the Sunni Arab Tribes and the Kurds. (Report On The Flight From Al Hamdaniya; Staff Writers, Assyrian Federation of Sweden, July 2014)

There was heavy fighting between the Arab tribes and the Peshmerga and more residents left the city.

Kurdish forces and Daesh pounded each other with mortars. The Kurds positioned themselves on the east side of Qaraqosh, Daesh and the 'Revolutionary Tribes' stationed themselves on the west and south side, near the villages of Tawajna and Qurtaba-Arab and south of Balawat. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014)

The Arabs gave the Kurdish forces an ultimatum to leave by 7 pm or face an attack. (50,000 Christians flee Iraqi city ahead of ISIL, Pamela Geller, Author's Blog, June 27, 2014)

The residents began to hear the rockets exploding not far from the town. Two rockets fell only a few meters from the houses on the edge of the city.

At **1 pm on June 25<sup>th</sup>** the town panicked and a mass exodus began which led to 50,000 people leaving their homes within 24 hours.

On Thursday, **June 26**, the Arabs called Assyrian Catholic archbishop of Qaraqosh, Youhana Boutros Moshe, saying that their representatives wanted to come to the city and visit him in two days, but he did not agree to allow them inside the city. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014) (Syrian Catholic Archbishop Moshe's appeal to the international community: Save us! Voice of the Persecuted, June 28, 2014)

On Friday, **June 27th**, Archbishop Moshe attempted to mediate to prevent the destruction of the city. The Sunnis offered the Kurds a truce through the Archbishop. They assured him that they were not targeting the Assyrians but the Kurds who had provoked them by entering their lands. This was not a credible claim, and every such ruse had been used in the past to expose non-Muslims to victimize them. The commanders of the Kurdish militia said they would not accept a truce. They informed the bishop to tell the Sunni Arabs that they must leave in order for the shelling to stop. (Days of Terror: Iraqi Christians Live in Fear of DAESH, Katrin Kuntz, Spiegel Online International, June 26, 2014)

By the **first week of July**, the Arabs had fought their way to within one kilometer of the city and launched eight more mortars into the city, setting off a mass exodus of most residents toward Erbil. (Inside an Iraqi Christian ghost town, Christof Putzel journeys to the Christian town of Qaraqosh in Northern Iraq, which most residents have fled, Christof Putzel, Al Jazeera America, July 9, 2014.) (Iraqi abbot calls for action to ensure local Christians' future, staff writer, CNA/EWTN News, CNA/EWTN News, July 24, 2014) (Inside an Iraqi Christian ghost town, Christof Putzel, Al Jazeera America, July 9, 2014.)

Almost 80 percent of the inhabitants returned soon after, as the Peshmerga held the line against IS.

The sun was already up when Daesh attacked again with a stronger force on **August 6**, 2014. A mortar fell on a home in the Salamiya District on the Mosul side of Qaraqosh at 9:30 in the morning. Enam Heshoa, Habish (23) had just entered the garden of her life-long friend and neighbor Amal Elias Abdulla (23), and her baby girl, Eres, to announce the happy news that she was engaged to an American-(Assyrian)-Iraqi man and would be married soon. They had talked about the marriage proposal the night before, but Enam was going to think about the proposal overnight, and announce her decision to her friend the next morning.

Amal's four young nephews were eating breakfast in the garden as Enam entered, and she said hello to them, then walked toward the kitchen door. Amal's parents and two brothers and two sisters were inside the home. A rocket fired by Daesh suddenly landed in the garden just outside the kitchen door, right where she was walking. Enam was hit in the abdomen and mortally wounded. She staggered toward the kitchen,

"I'm dying" she said. They were her last words.

She fell on the stairs, unable to lift her feet over the steps. Amal's mother, Naima, went to bring water for her, thinking she was only dizzy from the bomb blast. She brought the water and lifted her face to wash it and give her water to drink, but realized when she lifted her head, that she had died.

All the family ran into the garden to check on the four boys. David (4.5) was hit directly, and only his legs were left, about 50 meters from the house in the corner of the garden, the rest of his body had exploded into pieces across the garden, on the trees, ground, and walls. The chickens were eating his brains from the ground.

Melad (10), was hit in the head with shrapnel, and cast to the garden wall, where he fell to the ground, unconscious. The shrapnel also scratched and tore his skin in many places.

Anas (8), was also cast against the wall. He was eviscerated by the bomb blast but alert, but unaware of his injuries.

Another boy, the son of Hikmat Paulus Kyrio (9), was riding his bike in the street in front of the house. His spine was broken and his body was eviscerated, and lying in front of the gate. His bicycle was thrown 30 meters further away. The family did not know who he was.

The family gathered up the three boys who were still alive in blankets. Their uncle, Khalid Elias Shumes (45), lived just a couple of houses away, and rushed to the scene. They put the children into his car and rushed them to the hospital in Qaraqush. His brother Mazen (35), the father of Milad and Anas, went along to help him. David's father, Adeeb Elias Shimes (40), stayed behind to mourn his son.

The doctors, Arabs from Mosul who had been given jobs in the Christian village, had all fled the hospital but a few Christian nurses had stayed on duty. Khalid's sister was a nurse assigned to the hospital, but she was off-duty at the time. The family called her to meet them at the hospital, and she arrived there before the boys did. She did not treat their wounds, but just wrapped them to reduce blood loss and determined to transfer them to Erbil to the emergency hospital 60 kilometers away.

The ambulance driver who was on duty said he didn't have enough gas in the ambulance to get to Erbil. He was also Muslim Arab who had been appointed to that station by the Muslim government in Mosul. They loaded the three boys into the car. Khalid went with the driver in the ambulance to buy him some gas from a black market station nearby.

There were many cars on the road, with people evacuating from Qaraqush and surrounding villages. Khalid's brother, Mazin, the father of Milad and Anas, was in the ambulance with Khalid, the two boys, and the driver. It took them 2.5 hours to get to the hospital in Erbil. Midway on the journey, Milad began to appear jaundiced from lack of blood. His skull was fractured in the back, and when Khalid tried to raise his head, it went inside his skull. He slipped into death on the journey.

His father was praying in the front seat that his other son would survive. They used the siren and flashing lights when they needed to pass. There were 15 rows of cars jamming the checkpoint, and backed up about three kilometers. They had to drive on the opposing lane against traffic to pass the checkpoint. The officers tried to make them leave the car behind, and carry the boys. After an argument between Khalid and the General, they were allowed to pass through.

From that point they were able to drive freely to the hospital, though in heavy traffic. Anas was still alert, but growing faint from loss of blood, asking for water. They gave him a little. When they reached the hospital, and removed his clothing on the examination table, the full extent of his injuries became known. They gave him blood, but the blood was flowing out through a cut vein. An Indian doctor performed surgery immediately on his leg, which was split in half, though the doctor had wanted to cut the leg off. An hour later, the surgeon operated a second time. Then another five hours later, a third surgery was performed by the same Indian doctor.

That day, Khalid took Milad's body back to his family in Quosh in a taxi while Mazin stayed in the hospital with Anas. The city was nearly empty when they took his body to the Mar Zena Church, for the funeral. Milad's mother was there but his father was still in Erbil with their son undergoing surgery. The funeral

was cut short when they were warned that they should evacuate the city. They hastily buried his body, and fled immediately afterward to Erbil.

The boy who was hit on the bicycle was reunited with his parents in the hospital after they had heard the news of a boy being hit on a bicycle. The two families lost touch after the reunion, in their displacement.

The family all evacuated Qaraqush the same day and settled into a school, making trips to the hospital to check on Anas. After two weeks Anas joined them in the corner of a classroom in a public school with hundreds of other refugees at Hamarabi School in Ankawa. Four months later, they were able to move to a house in a poor neighborhood, which the Church rented for 5 families to share. Over time, his leg healed enough that he could walk a little, but he is still waiting for help for further surgery. As he grew over the next two years, his good leg grew longer than the injured one. Surgery will be required to correct this, but they haven't found funding for the surgery. This kind of surgery cannot be done in Iraq, so external funding for a trip to another country will be required.

a nine-year-old boy, ripping open the legs of another 7-year-old boy, who received 130 stitches and wished he had died. Another boy died in the hospital while being treated. In the distance, Daesh was shouting "Allahu Akbar!" (Christians on the edge of extinction, Ellen Vaughn, February 21, 2015). Another five-year boy was ripped in half by a blast. (A Strategic response to the middle eastern crisis, Staff Writer, World Help, No date). Still another boy was badly injured (Solidarity with Christians in Iraq, Staff Writer, The Outreach Foundation, October 16, 2014). But the Kurds held the line for a while, and Daesh did not immediately enter the city.



Assyrians killed in Qaraqush. Enam Esho Habish (24), David Adib Elias Shamis (5, center), Mazen Elias Shamis (9, right) (Kurds and Daesh Clash Outside Baghdede; Daesh Using Yazidis As Human Shields, Staff Writer, AINA News, August 6, 2014)

Her sister moved to Seje Village with her family after the invasion.

Fearing further injury, Marcel Namrud Ephreem (21), Maro Kareem Khacho (20) and their infant daughter Adhrah, left Qaraqush that day 4 pm in a pickup with Marcel's parents and siblings. The roads were

crowded with people fleeing the town. They were members of the Benjamin (Behnam) and Sarah Church). They drove to Erbil, reaching there at 2 am, 10 hours later, usually just a half hour journey. They stayed in a hotel for two days, then came to Seje, where their cousins from other Christian villages had sought refuge. There were about 30 people, all relatives, living in that house. It was too crowded, so they went to live with a host family in Seje whom they didn't know before. Then they moved to a house in Seje that belonged to a wealthy Dohuk family. They were allowed to stay without paying rent for about five months, after which the owner asked for rent. They moved to building that had been a 2-room bar previously, with 12 people sharing the tiny space and the tent the pitched next to it), cleaned it and remained there for 18 months, until the Christian camp opened in Seje (unit 20). Marcel found occasional work hauling alcohol in a local warehouse for about \$2 per hour.

Georgees Barnard Georgees (44, unmarried) and his 3 unmarried adult sisters left Qaraqush August first, several days before the invasion, fearing an invasion might happen during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan. They were members of the Benjamin (Behnam) and Sarah Church. They took their clothes and valuables and went to the Christian Ishawa Village, deep in the Kurdistan region, and rented a house. He returned alone to Qaraqush for the funeral of the three who were killed by a Daesh rocket in Qaraqush on August 5<sup>th</sup>, the day before the invasion. About a thousand people attended the funeral. He returned to his sisters that evening in Ishawa. Later, he found a job working in the alcohol warehouse in Seje Village, and moved there October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to rent a house.

Michael Afram Butros (51) had a sheep farm and worked in a barbershop in Qaraqush. He, his wife Sabiha Baku Bani (49) and their six children left Qaraqush in a pickup truck with two other families at noon on **August 6, 2014**. They were members of the St. John (Mar Yohanna) Church. There were bullets from Daesh flying around them as they left, but none of them were hit. It took them six hours to drive to Dohuk, a trip that at other times would take only an hour, and from there they made their way to Seje Village, which some of his friends told him was a safe place. A wealthy Christian family in Dohuk allowed them to stay in their second house in Seje rent free, where he continues to live with two of his married sons and their families.

Meetings were held by residents and church leaders on the afternoon of **August 6<sup>th</sup>** about whether to leave the city. During the meeting, people looked outside the windows and saw the Peshmerga changing from their uniforms to civilian clothes, preparing to abandon the fight. (Christians on the edge of extinction, Ellen Vaughn, February 21, 2015).

The residents had their dinner, and afterward celebrated the evening Mass on the feast of the Transfiguration (Eid Atajelli) in the churches. As the ceremony was drawing to a close, the sound of the fighting grew louder, indicating that it was closer. After the ceremony, a message was received from Daesh giving the standard ultimatum, convert to Islam, pay the tax, or leave the city. (Uprooted Qaraqush: 'The Biggest Island of Christianity in the Islamic Ocean,' Doreen Abi Raad, NC Register, January 20, 2015).

The streets filled with panicking people leaving the city, but there were not enough cars for everyone, so children were sent ahead of their parents (Christians on the edge of extinction, Ellen Vaughn, February 21, 2015).

And around 30,000 residents drove or walked toward Erbil all through the night. (Unique Christian manuscripts safeguarded in Kurdistan, Sharmila Devi, Rudaw, January 11, 2014).

Rayan Khuder Behnam (38), and his wife Rita Bassam Elias (28), their two daughters and son, left Qaraqoosh at midnight, just hours before Daesh invaded. He was a furniture maker, and had a little shop in the Bazaar. They were members of the Benjamin (Behnam) and Sarah Church. Rayan felt safe until the Peshmerga left, but when he saw them leaving, he quickly gathered his family and left in their car. They drove to Erbil to his sister's house for a week, then he rented a house in Erbil. They stayed there for a month, then went to stay in a rented house in Dohuk. They moved to Seje in January 2016, when the Christian camp outside Ankawa was prepared.

Others hid in the churches, thinking that would give them safety. (Qaraqoosh Christians tell of IS terror in Iraq, Sheren Khalel and Matthew Vickery, Middle East Eye, August 8, 2014).

Hikmat Noor Rafoosh (54) a single man, was one of the last Christian residents to leave Bartolla at 4:20 am on August 6, 2014. He was a security guard for Mar Georgees Church. He left with his elderly father (83), his two unmarried sisters having left about eight hours earlier. He saw Daesh fighters entering the city as he was leaving to Erbil in a car with a Shia driver. On the way to Erbil, they saw Daesh was at the checkpoint, so they waited an hour, hoping they would leave, but eventually decided to turn around and go to Karamles. They saw Daesh was also at that checkpoint, so they turned back again and rested for an hour at the Barbara Monastery (Kadessa Barbara).

They thought they saw that Daesh had left the checkpoint and tried to pass, but Daesh was hiding around the corner and caught them. He was asked if he was a Christian, and he said "yes." They didn't ask about his money, which he had forgotten in his home, and didn't ask the Shia driver about his religion or ask for his ID. He let them pass. As they moved forward, they reached a turnoff to Erbil or Bartolla. Daesh was stopping cars there. They were asked where they were from, and he answered Bartolla. He asked if they were Christians, and he told them to go back to Bartolla.

His father told him a backroad to their village. There he parted with the driver, and offered to pay the driver, but he refused to take money. They exited the car before the checkpoint. His father said he wanted to go home, and they argued about it. They saw Daesh in the village, and they had captured four Christians. They decided to go another way to Hikmat's grandfather's house. His father saw his friend along the way, and they changed their plan, to go an Arabic Village called Skoff Village.

They were still in Bartolla at the time. His father became tired, and wanted to rest and take some tablets. They went to a place near the church where he had been a guard. He went to get water for his father, and they both took a drink. His father said he was hungry, so Hikmat went into the church to get some bisquits and returned. After a rest, they started walking to Skoff Village. When they were halfway to Skoff, Daesh entered Bartolla with their main force, so they hid for ten minutes, then they resumed walking after Daesh passed.

They reached Skoff Village after a seven kilometer walk from Bartolla. His father said he couldn't walk further, and wanted to walk back home. They argued again about separating from one another, and eventually decided to walk back to Bartolla. After five minutes, they saw a car coming and stopping about 50 meters away. It was a Muslim family, which gave them a ride back to Bartolla, and told them his relative could take them to Skoff for a fee. They agreed, and he drove near to Dohuk avoiding the Daesh checkpoints. At the Peshmerga checkpoint, he called his family and went with them to Seje to stay in the church. Later he rented a house in Dohuk.

Loai Behnam Toubia, another taxi driver, had loaded his family in his car and fled when a bullet from Daesh pierced his car and entered his abdomen. His car burst into flames and he barely escaped with his family. (For Iraq's Christian Exiles, Suffering Abounds, Elise Harris, Catholic News Agency, May 3, 2016)

A Christian cab driver named Amed drove down a dark street, unknowingly, straight into a nest of Daesh soldiers. (Christians on the edge of extinction, Ellen Vaughn, February 21, 2015). Militants forced him from his taxi. One fighter crushed his left temple with the butt of his AK-47, broke his teeth, and then shattered his wrist and elbow with his heavy gun. Amed tumbled to the ground. The terrorist shot him twice, shouted "Allahu Akbar," and left him dying on the road. Later, a compassionate Kurdish soldier picked up Amed. He was taken to a hospital, where he received three pints of blood and survived. (Qaraqosh Christians tell of IS terror in Iraq, Sheren Khalel and Matthew Vickery, Middle East Eye, August 8, 2014).

Peshmerga forces announced to Christian leaders they were pulling back and that residents should flee. Qaraqosh Christians tell of IS terror in Iraq, Sheren Khalel and Matthew Vickery, Middle East Eye, August 8, 2014). The Christian leaders made an announcement by loudspeaker for all residents to evacuate the city. Peshmerga were running alongside fleeing Christians, shedding their military clothes because they realized he would be a higher target if they caught them in uniform. Daesh militants were shooting at Peshmerga and civilians as they tried to flee together. (Fleeing for their lives, Staff Writer, Samaritan's Purse, Undated)

On August 7<sup>th</sup> at 3 am ISIL entered Qaraqosh. Half an hour later, they captured Tal Kayf, Bartella and Karamlesh. (ISIL seizes largest Christian town in Iraq as thousands flee violence, Hurriyet Daily News, İpek Yezdani, May 15, 2014)

By 4 am the shooting was louder inside the city (Qaraqosh Christians tell of IS terror in Iraq, Sheren Khalel and Matthew Vickery, Middle East Eye, August 8, 2014).

By 5 am Daesh was throughout the city, shooting guns in the streets and shouting "Allahu Akbar" (Christians on the edge of extinction, Ellen Vaughn, February 21, 2015)

Nearly all the remaining thousands of Christians fled on foot or in cars as Daesh entered the city. The roads were congested with others fleeing the horror of DAESH, and the traffic moved at a snail's pace. Many ran out of fuel, and they were forced to make the remaining distance in the heat of the next morning. (Helping Victims of DAESH, Sandy, Faces Magazine, September 25, 2015). (Daesh Forced Elderly Assyrian Couple to March Out of Baghdede, Leah Sorith, AINA News, August 29, 2014)

When most of the fleeing people reached the checkpoint outside of Erbil manned by the Peshmerga, the guards allowed the people through but not their vehicles. (Iraq Christians flee as Islamic State takes Qaraqosh, Staff Writer, BBC News, August 7, 2014)

Only about 75 people remained in the city. Some had made a conscious choice to stay in their homes despite the advancing militants. (Qaraqosh Christians tell of IS terror in Iraq, Sheren Khalel and Matthew Vickery, Middle East Eye, August 8, 2014).

Many realized too late that Daesh fighters were going to take control. (Christians Flee Daesh Rule in Northern Iraq Amid Persecution, Carlo Angerer, NBC News, September 10, 2014).



Khiria Al-Kas Isaac (54) and her husband Mufeed Wadee' Tobiya awoke on the morning of August 7 to find IS had over-run the town: (Iraqi Christian: 'DAESH terrorist held a sword to my throat but I refused to convert,' Simon Caldwell, Catholic Herald, September 11, 2014). The militants spoke several different languages. Daesh went house to house to find remaining Christians. They told them to convert to Islam or they would be decapitated. She refused, saying "I was born Christian and if that leads me to death, I prefer to die a Christian." She was separated from her husband and put with 46 other women who had similarly refused. They were whipped and beaten together in the same room over a 10-day period in an attempt to make them convert to Islam. All the women were crying, but they all continued to refuse to convert. An Daesh terrorist who was flogging her across her back told her he would hurt her more unless she became a Muslim. She answered him "I am an old lady [and] sick. I have not got any daughter or son that may increase the number of Muslims or follow you, what is the benefit if I will convert?"

A young single woman, Rana, refused to evacuate Qaraqosh with her brothers, saying "Daesh isn't coming. This is all a lie." So one of her brothers, Diyaa stayed behind with her. On August 7th, they woke to a nearly empty town with only the poor, old, ill, and themselves. A drunk Christian man had passed out in his backyard and also awoke to IS. Daesh broke into stores and looted them. Then they went house to house looting and looking for remaining Christians. Their house was poor and run-down, and no one entered their house. They were in touch with other Christians who had remained in the village. They remained hidden for three full weeks.



Najib (75) and his wife Dalal (72), an elderly Assyrian Christian couple were too old and ill to leave when the majority of the population fled. Daesh stole the couple's ID cards and all their money, took them across the river and left them without food and water at 10 am to walk on their own to safety. They would not reach safety until midnight that day. They leaned on each other as they walked until Dalal passed out. Then another man from their city carried Najib on his back for a few hours. Finally a nun who was driving a primitive wagon carried Najib until they reached the Kurdish check point near Erbil, where he was

transferred by ambulance to Erbil. (Daesh Forced Elderly Assyrian Couple to March Out of Baghdede, Leah Sorith, AINA News, August 29, 2014)

Others moved about for the next three days. A Christian man who was caught smoking a cigarette was beaten with a water hose 20 times as punishment.

On the 10th day, August 17th, all of the women were assembled together again. A terrorist put a sword on Khiria Al-Kas Isaac's neck in front of all the other ladies and said, "Convert or you will be killed." She answered: "I am happy to be a martyr." They removed the sword, robbed her of all her money, rejoined her with her husband and two other women, drove them nearer to the Kurdish-controlled area and expelled them.

On the evening of August 21st, Diyaa and Rana, still hiding in their basement, heard that Daesh would allow them to leave safely and a local Mullah was going door to door with that message. It was a ruse to draw the remaining Christians out of hiding for systematic processing. Their neighbors, hoping to save Diyaa and Rana, told the mullah where they were hiding. He found them and told them to report the next morning to the local medical center, to receive "checkups" before being deported from the Islamic State.

When they reached the medical clinic on August 22nd, there were 75 or so residents gathered there. (Girl still missing in Iraq, family prays for safe return, Ruth Kramer, Mission Network News, July 21, 2015.

For two weeks, Aida Hana Noah (43) had been at home with her daughter and her husband, Khadr Azzou Abada (65). He was blind, and Aida was ill, so she had decided that the journey north would be too hard for them. They had no place to escape. So they were hoping for mercy for the blind and disabled from the terrorists. (Girl still missing in Iraq, family prays for safe return, Ruth Kramer, Mission Network News, July 21, 2015. She sent her 25-year-old son with her three other children, who ranged in age from 10 to 13, to safety but she kept Christina (3) with them, thinking she was too young to be without her mother.

Another family that stayed behind in Qaraqosh included Adel, his wife Fida Boutros Matti, their daughter Nevin (10) and two younger sons Ninos and Iwan. First they were taken from their homes to a central area and stripped of their money, documents and mobile phones. They returned to their homes and waited. Twice they tried to flee but were stopped by Daesh fighters. After 13 days, the fighters returned to their house and separated the men from the women. Fida and her three children were taken with 30 other women and their children to a house and told they had to convert to Islam, pay the tax, or be killed. They couldn't pay the tax because all their money had been confiscated. That left them with two options, conversion or beheading. (Has the End Finally Come for Iraq's Christians? Patrick Cockburn, Counterpoint, November 24, 2014)

They reported to the medical center as they had been told. By 9 a.m., Daesh had separated the men from the women. They also separated the older from the younger:

"You" and "you," they pointed.

Among the men, Talal Abdul Ghani quietly placed a final call to his family before the fighters confiscated his phone. He had been publicly whipped for refusing to convert to Islam, as his sisters, who fled from other towns, later recounted.

“Let me talk to everybody,” he wept.

“I don’t think they’re letting me go.” It was the last time they heard from him.

Seated in the crowd, the local Daesh emir, Saeed Abbas, heavily bearded, surveyed the female prisoners. His eyes moved to Aida, who was holding her 3-year-old daughter, Christina. Aida felt his gaze and gripped Christina closer to her (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015)

The two groups were put on two separate buses. They told all the women to get up from their seats in the clinic and proceed toward the bus, moving ahead of the men. They carried their bags, which had clothes and ID cards. They told them to take their gold and IDs out, which they handed over, and then IS took all their luggage away from them. (Mother of 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl Kidnapped by Daesh: 'She Will Die If She Does Not See Me,' Staff Writer, AINA News, August 28, 2014.) Aida complied:

We went and sat in the big bus, and then one man came aboard, I was carrying my child in my arms, I sat in the bus and he came and took her from me, snatched her from me, and left the bus. I followed him inside [the building], and my little girl was crying inside the center. An old man, one of those Daesh people, who was apparently their leader then carried her. (Mother of 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl Kidnapped by Daesh: 'She Will Die If She Does Not See Me,' Staff Writer, AINA News, August 28, 2014.)

Aida was helping her mother on the bus, and holding Christina. Suddenly Christina was plucked from her arms by a young fighter who was called “Fadil.” Aida screamed and begged him to return her daughter, but he didn’t listen. Christine was taken back into the building, her mother screaming and pleading with him (Islamic State Kidnaps Christian Toddler and Women, Judit Neurink, Rudaw, August 30, 2014)

Please, in the name of God, give her back,” Aida pleaded.

The driver carried Christina back into the medical center. Then he returned without the child. As the people in the bus prayed to leave town, Aida kept begging for Christina. Finally, the driver went inside again. He came back empty-handed. (Islamic State Kidnaps Christian Toddler and Women, Judit Neurink, Rudaw, August 30, 2014)

The child was passed to the Emir, who came out, flanked by two fighters. He was holding Christina against his chest. Aida fought her way off the bus (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015).

“Is this your daughter?” he asked?

“Yes!” she replied.

“She is crying for you.” He taunted. (Mother of 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl Kidnapped By DAESH: 'She Will Die If She Does Not See Me,' Staff Writer, AINA News, August 28, 2014.)

She begged him.

“Poor girl, what has she done wrong? For the sake of Allah, for the sake of Muhammad, what do you worship? Give her to me; I’m nursing and she’ll die if she’s not with me. I am her mother.”

The man pointed his machine gun at her.

“Shut up! If you speak another word I will let them slaughter you. I will call them now to slaughter you.”

He motioned with his gun.

“Go quickly to the car. Come now, go!” (Mother of 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl Kidnapped by DAESH: 'She Will Die If She Does Not See Me,' Staff Writer, AINA News, August 28, 2014.)

“Please give me my daughter,” she said again.

The emir cocked his head at his bodyguards to move her.

“Get on the bus before we kill you,” one said. Christina reached for her mother, crying.

“Get on the bus before we slaughter your family,” he repeated.



Open Doors/ The parents of Christina, who was kidnapped and taken to Mosul

The two busses moved forward. No one was sure where either bus was going. (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015).



Christina

(Mother of 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl Kidnapped by Daesh: 'She Will Die If She Does Not See Me,' Staff Writer, AINA News, August 28, 2014.)

As the bus rumbled north out of town, Aida sat crumpled in a seat next to her husband. Many of the 40-odd people on it began to weep for Christina and for themselves. (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015). (Islamic State Kidnaps Christian Toddler and Women, Judit Neurink, Rudaw, August 30, 2014)

All the time, Ayda kept looking back, desperately hoping to get a glimpse through the muddy windows and see her girl coming back. Every time when the bus would slow down or even stop, her hope increased that Christine would be returned to her any minute. But it did not happen. (Girl still missing in Iraq, family prays for safe return, Ruth Kramer, Mission Network News, July 21, 2015).

The bus they were on took a sharp right toward the Khazir River that marked an edge of the land Daesh had seized. Several minutes later, the driver stopped and ordered everyone off. Led by a shepherd who had traveled this path with his flock, the sick and elderly descended and began to walk to the Zab River to cross to safety. The journey took 12 hours. (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015). (Islamic State Kidnaps Christian Toddler and Women, Judit Neurink, Rudaw, August 30, 2014)

The second bus that was filled with the young and healthy, also headed north. But instead of turning east toward the river, it turned west, toward Mosul. Among its captives was Diyaa. Rana wasn't with him. She had been bundled into a third vehicle, a new four-wheel drive, along with an 18-year-old girl named Rita, who'd come to Qaraqosh to help her elderly father flee, and little Christian. (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015).

The two young women and little Christina were driven to Mosul, along with Fida and her daughter Nevin (10) and two younger sons Ninios and Iwan. Inside Mosul the women were first taken to al-Kindi Prison, but were redirected to a house in the Habba District. The four women and four children were put in one

room next to a room with 30 Yezidi girls between 10 and 18 who were being repeatedly raped by their guards. Fida told the guards her daughter Nevin was eight though she was really ten, to try to keep her from being raped. (Has the End Finally Come for Iraq's Christians? Patrick Cockburn, Counterpoint, November 24, 2014)

The men, including Fida's husband Adel, were taken to another location in Mosul. IS told her that her husband had converted to Islam. She then spoke to him on the telephone and they agreed to convert to survive. They were reunited as a family in an Islamic court in Mosul to register their conversion, and their children were renamed Aisha, Abdel-Rahman and Mohammed. They went to live in a house in a Sunni Muslim district and from there, pretending to take a child for medical treatment in Mosul, they followed a plan to escape using contacts with the Kurdistan Government. (Has the End Finally Come for Iraq's Christians? Patrick Cockburn, Counterpoint, November 24, 2014).

The day after they arrived in Mosul, Rana's captor called her brothers.

"If you come near her, I'll blow the house up. I'm wearing a suicide vest," he said.

Then he passed the phone to Rana, who whispered, in Syriac, the story of being taken to Mosul. Her brothers were afraid to ask any questions lest her answers make trouble for her.

"I'm taking care of a 3-year-old named Christina," she said.

The last time Rana, one of the women taken by Daesh from Qaraqosh, was able to speak to her family by phone was in September, 2014. Rita had been given as a slave to a Daesh leader; Christina was given to a family to be raised as a Muslim. Rana said little about her own circumstances, and her family didn't ask.

Since that time, the phone Rana used has been switched off. "There's word they're still alive," Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015).

By September 7, 2014 the Iraqi and Kurdish forces surrounded Bashiqa, and were advancing on its center, (Iraqi Kurds hold control over Makhmour, Staff Writer, Press TV, September 7, 2014.)

Bashiqa was comprised of a Yezidis, Shabaks, Assyrian Christians, and Arab Muslims. It had long been a target of Sunni violence, a town of "unbelievers" living on the margins of the Sunni Muslim society in Mosul and despised by them. In 2012, car bombs went off in the town.<sup>[2]</sup> Some 210 Christian families fled there from Mosul, thinking they would be far enough away to be safe there. (Iraqi abbot calls for action to ensure local Christians' future, staff writer, CNA/EWTN News, CNA/EWTN News, July 24, 2014). Meanwhile, Yezidis began to flee the area toward their strongholds in Shekhan, Sharia, and other areas, as Daesh targeted them even more than they did Christians.<sup>[3][4]</sup> When Daesh invaded Bashiqa, Christians fled the city to other Christian villages in the Nineveh Plains, such as the Christian stronghold of Qaraqush or the Christian Districts of Kurdish cities like Erbil, Dohuk, Suleimaniya, and Soran/Diala.

A young Shia Turkman who escaped with his mother and sister spoke ten days later of how his family had suffered in the invasion. His lip quivered as he spoke about Daesh taking the men, and expelling the women and smaller children:

My father and two of my brothers were kidnapped by Daesh. They stayed behind in Tal Afar in order to protect our house but Daesh came and kidnapped them. There are about 80 people that were kidnapped in Tal Afar. My family's situation is unknown. We haven't heard anything about them yet. There is nothing to do here. All I have left is thinking about the destiny of my brothers and father and if they will come back. ('They said to us, if you don't leave, then we'll kill you," Sophie Cousins, SBS, August 8, 2014)

There were gaps in their house-to-house mop-up operations that left people with disabilities alone, unable to flee and unable to care for themselves. After a few weeks, a Muslim resident entered the home of his neighbor because of a bad smell, and discovered the bodies of a deaf and mute Christian man, George David, and his deaf and mute son Saad David dead from starvation. They were alone, and didn't know to flee, or have any way to flee. The Muslim neighbor buried their bodies in a church cemetery. (Daesh Abduct 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl from Fleeing Family; 3 Starve to Death, Staff Writer, AINA News, August 25, 2014). Also in Bashiqa, a 70-year-old Christian man was found in his home sitting in his chair starved to death. (Daesh Abduct 3 Year-old Assyrian Girl From Fleeing Family; 3 Starve to Death, Staff Writer, AINA News, August 25, 2014)

Battniya was the next to fall as IS swept toward the remaining Christian villages.

Saher Khalil Georgees (52) and his wife Najeeb Yelda Matti (47) and their two unmarried daughters had left Mosul in the summer of 2007 because so many Christians were being killed there. They were renting a house at the time, and took all their furniture and possessions with them to Battniya, where they rented a house. They left Battniya on August 3, 2014, the same day all the residents left. Daesh was already in Tel Kef, and they feared they would be invaded next. Saher had a wedding shop in Battniya, and they were able to take their valuables with them. They settled in Dohuk to some church apartments, and stayed there for 19 months, until the camp opened in Seje Village, where they moved to a caravan, number 10. Terrorists took Najeeb's brother Afram Yelda Matti (48) on June 10, 2014 as he was travelling by car from Baghdad to Battniya with four Yezidis. She has heard nothing from him since. He left a wife and a seven year old son.

# Chapter 8: Invading Christian Villages

Hakim Saadula Georgees (32) and his wife Ruaa Sabah Sadiq (26) and their sons George Hakim Saadula (6) and Behnam Kahim Saadula (5), lived in Noor District of Mosul, on the East bank of the Tigris River. He had an auto supply shop, but terrorists took all his supplies. His street was called “death street” because so many Christians were killed there. He saw bodies of Christians on the street, and was told the reason for their death, which was consistently because they had been working with the Americans. Another Christian man, Hani Matti Naoum had a restaurant, and was catering the Army base. Daesh tried to kidnap him, but he ran, so they shot him dead in the street.

Hakim and Ruaa moved their family to Tel Kef, on January 18, 2007 where Hakim made an auto parts business with his brother, and business was better than it had been in Mosul. They stayed in Tel Kef until July 23, 2014, when they were hearing that Daesh was planning to attack. They left for Dohuk, where his cousin was living, but had an auto accident on the road. There were many people fleeing in the road, not staying in the lanes. Their relative came and took them to the emergency hospital and after they were treated, they went to live in Dohuk with his cousin. They moved to a caravan at the Chaldean Church in Seje on July 28, 2014, and have been there since.

Talal Butros Telco (44), and his wife Evonne Hanna Mickael (44), and their three sons had left Mosul in 2010. On July 27, 2014 their friends told them Daesh was invading Tel Kef, and they should prepare to leave. His car was old, so he wanted to go early. They left one week before the invasion. They moved to Seje Village, where his uncle rented a house, then they rented a separate house.

Adil Yousif Dawood (60) and wife Kofar Ibrahim Yousif (48), left Teleskof at 3 pm on August 3, 2014. Their life became difficult. The water and electricity were cut, and it was difficult to travel to Mosul to buy food. The wheat fields were burned. The Peshmerga were bringing water to their houses with tanker trucks, but it wasn't enough. They had to supplement it with additional tanker purchases. The Shia Muslims from nearby Fawiza Village ran away when Mosul was invaded. Daesh was threatening to invade Teleskof. The residents were seeing a lot of scary pictures on Facebook messages from their friends, along with warnings from IS.

They fled to Dohuk to his cousin's house. Then they came to Seje and stayed for one day with the school headmaster's house, then in the school with many others for about five months. When they were pushed out of the school, and couldn't find a house in Seje, they rented an apartment in Dohuk. Finally they came to Seje in November 2015 when they were able to rent a house. He returned because he liked the people in the village.

Emad Noel Fatoohi (35), his wife Leena Elia Majid (31), and their children Mohed (7), Deema (5), and Zain (4), were living in Mosul until September 2013. They were living in the Saa District, where Emad was working in a cement factory. Nearly all the Christians on his street left Mosul after a car bomb was exploded outside their Dominican church in Saa in 2010, damaging the garden wall. Several Christians were killed about that same time, and others were kidnapped and ransomed back to their families. All the people from the church left, including the clergy stationed there. Over the intervening three years, he bought land in Teleskof, about 35 kilometers from Mosul, and built a house there, commuting to work at the same cement factory in Mosul.



About a week before IS entered Mosul on June 6, 2014, they launched their first attack on Tel Kef around 10 pm, about five miles from Teleskof, but the Peshmerga repelled them. Emad could see and hear this battle because the villages were so close, and he saw all the residents of Tel Kef fleeing on the road, so he started getting ready in case they had to evacuate. He could see the Peshmerga going from Dohuk to Tel Kef to fight with IS, in tanks, Humvees, pickups, and busses full of soldiers.

When Daesh entered Mosul, his sister fled without taking time to gather any possessions, with her family of five, to seek refuge with their family in Teleskof. One week later, his sister put on a hijab and she went with her husband back to their house in Mosul to get what they could carry. They managed the trip successfully, though they couldn't carry very much. His cousins, two older widows, stayed late after Daesh came, and left with the flood who left after the Daesh ultimatum. As they were leaving in a taxi, Daesh stopped them, had women search their bodies, and confiscated 70 million dinars they had been hiding in their clothes before letting them pass. His cousins stayed for two weeks before leaving to seek refuge further away in the church in Ankawa.

On **August 3**, 2014, one of his neighbors, who was a soldier with the Peshmerga, called him from Tel Kef to tell him the Peshmerga were withdrawing from Tel Kef and that he should leave. Emad, his sisters, and both their families fled Teleskof in the afternoon. As they were leaving, they saw the Kurdish Peshmerga on the road with tanks, Humvees, Toyota pickups, and busses full of soldiers from Dohuk on their way to the battle in Tel Kef.

They took whatever food, clothes, and valuables that they could fit in their two cars. They went directly to Seje village, a Christian village, where his step brother had a vacant house, and the two families moved in. They received abundant aid mostly from Christian organizations and churches in the beginning, but over the next two years, the aid dried up almost entirely. He was not able to find work in Seje or the broader area for the subsequent years.

Daesh faced no resistance and rolled into Tel Kayf around 10 pm on **August 6, 2014**. **Tel Kayf**, the home of a significant Christian community as well as members of the Shabak Shiite minority, emptied overnight. (Islamic State takes over Iraq's largest Christian town, Barney Henderson, Telegraph, August 7, 2014).

Boutros Sargon, a resident who fled the town, described what he saw as he fled:

"I heard some gunshots last night and when I looked outside, I saw a military convoy from the Islamic State. They were shouting 'Allahu Akbar' (God is greatest)," he said.

By that night, Qaraqosh, Tal Kayf, Bartella and Karamlesh had been emptied of their minority populations and were under the control of the militants." (Islamic State takes over Iraq's largest Christian town, Barney Henderson, Telegraph, August 7, 2014). Teleskof would soon follow.

Raid Saadq Razouke (55) and his wife Hanni Telko Kakos (62) were from Teleskof but were living in Tel Kef when they fled from Daesh on **August 6, 2014 at 4 pm**, just six hours before the first attack. Raid was recovering from cancer surgery he had in 2007. They didn't have a car, and were afraid to walk in the street, so he and his wife walked through the fields from Teleskof to Al Quosh. From there they went to Baguera, a suburb of Dohuk, and stayed in the church for 16 months. They rented a house in Seje because the church in Dohuk recommended it.

Teleskof was an Assyrian Christian town with 4,000 residents, located about 19 miles from Mosul. The population had swelled with the influx from Mosul in the preceding years. Essentially all the people left a week before the main Daesh invasion of Teleskof, when a smaller attack was made on the town. Before Daesh entered, residents of Teleskof were well informed by their friends in other cities that Daesh was on the way there and they had opportunity to leave.

Subhi Azariah Toma (58) and his wife Ahlam Georges Yousif (48), and their 7 children, left Teleskof in two cars when they could see the Peshmerga were leaving. Some of their other children were married and travelled separately. They took only their clothes, IDs, and valuables. They left Teleskof on **August 6, 2014**. The Peshmerga told them to evacuate at **10 pm**. Daesh entered at 12 midnight when all the people were gone but a few elderly women. The Peshmerga didn't fight Daesh as they entered. Subhi and Ahlam took their kids to a Christian neighborhood in Dohuk to stay briefly with relatives until they found a cheap rental house near Domiz, where they stayed for 7 months. The building they were staying in was needed by the owner, so they left again. They moved to Seje where he had a friend, and later rented a house with two of his married sons and their families.

**Daesh entered Teleskof August 12, 2014, nine days after Emad and his family left. Daesh first took Tel Kef, then Battaniya, then Teleskof, all on the same day. Only some elderly women stayed behind.**

Some of the elderly stayed behind. Daesh cleared out the village, but they missed a few who hid themselves. Two women in their 60s were interviewed on March 9, 2015, after Kurds and Christian Militiamen had retaken the nearly vacant city: (In a Christian ghost town in Iraq, a small tale of survival, Nasar Ali, Rudaw March 9, 2015)

“When Daesh came all the people of our city fled, but I didn't have any family or relatives and I wasn't able to run so I stayed here,” said **Sarya Matto**, one of the two women now living in a tiny room with no electricity or services.

“I had a friend left here like me and when I found out the two of us got into a room, closed the doors and remained quiet.”

Matto and her companion **Madi Salim** say that 10 days into their hiding Daesh militants came knocking on their door.

“Though our house was far from the city center, 10 days later we heard human voices,” said Sarya. “Then they knocked on our door. They were speaking Arabic. We didn't open the door but they broke it down and came in. They were three, wearing long beards. They asked us for money but we didn't have any. They searched the house, then one of them saw my gold cross necklace and tore it from my neck.”

Matto recalled her ordeal with tearful eyes, saying she was trembling with fear the moment she faced the three militants.

“One of them said we should kill them, the other said ‘why waste our bullets,’” recalled Sarya. “Then they beat us with their rifle butts and left.”

Matto said that the Daesh advance on the town was so terrifying that everyone fled in haste and no one helped she and Salim flee. Without relatives or immediate family, their best bet was to stay and hide.

Matto said that after 15 days of hiding in the dark room she and her friend heard men speaking Kurdish outside, and they figured it was the Peshmerga.

“We immediately opened the door and we cried a lot when we saw them,” said Matto, remembering the evening at the end of August when the Kurdish Peshmerga recaptured Teleskof from DAESH. “They helped us. They brought us food and water.”

The tiny house where they remain is still dark and cold, without running water or electricity.

Even since Teleskof was liberated no one has dared return, because the town is too close to daily battles with DAESH. The entire population that fled the Daesh onslaught settled in the Kurdish province of Duhok.

“No one in the world has done to anyone what Daesh did to us,” said Matto, referring to the plight of tens of thousands of Christians killed, enslaved or driven from their homes by DAESH.

As the Kurds and Christian militiamen pushed open the door of one of the houses, expecting it to be empty, they saw a tiny, frail 91-year-old Christian woman there alone. **Christina** Jibbo Kakhosh began to cry. She was less than four feet tall, thin as a rail, and had been easily able to hide in a small space. The soldiers replaced the cross that Daesh had filmed themselves throwing down from a church.

They found another Christian woman, **Kamala** Karim Shaya, who sat on her front stoop, a kerchief tied over her thick white ponytail.

“Even if my father stands up in his grave, I will not leave this house. No, no, no, no, never, never, never,” she shouted. (Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East? Eliza Griswold, The New York Times Magazine, July 22, 2015)



A member of a Christian militia unit tries, unsuccessfully, to persuade Kamala Karim Shaya, one of the last residents of Telskuf, to move to a secured home near their barracks. Credit Peter van Agtmael/Magnum, for The New York Times

## Chapter 9: Resettling in Ankawa

Ankawa was a tiny Christian village just north of Erbil until the big city engulfed and claimed it. The name of the town is mentioned in a book by Bar Hebraeus entitled "A Brief History of the Countries," where he states: "Mongolian troops attacked the area of Erbil on Sunday July 1285 and reached some villages.....including Ankawa." 220 Christian families settled into a refugee camp built on the grounds of a former Youth Center where my son used to play soccer. Many others settled into an unfinished shopping center expansion near the US Consulate.

An unknown number of Christian refugees moved to Diana, a Christian village in the scenic mountainous portion of Kurdistan just an hour from the Iranian and Turkish borders. Most of the residents who preceded them there were long-term Christian families or those returning to Iraq in the past 10 years (both Kurds and Christians). The word "Diana" is derived from the Kurdish word for "Christian."

Others moved into the Kurdish cities of Dohuk and Suleimaniya, which had old Christian sections.

# Chapter 10: Resettling in Seje Village

# Chapter 11: Languishing in Camps

## **Chapter 12: Dispersing Abroad**



## Conclusion:

The systematic persecution of Christians in that area was unrelenting over two decades, not a sudden product of the recent Islamic State. The phenomenon was not a holy war, or a culture war, as it was portrayed. It was chiefly an elaborate robbery of Christians. Financial interests were paramount all around, for greedy Muslim men wanting to steal their neighbors' cars, houses and businesses, for terrorists wanting to occupy the finest houses and live lavish lives, and for young Arab foot-soldiers wanting free cars, Humvees, houses, sex slaves, guns, the false glory of martyrdom and the false promise of a thousand virgins in heaven.

Religious bigotry was also a causal factor, and political upheaval in Syria and Iraq was enabling. Grand ideations of Muslims taking over the world, and psychotropic drugs, fueled the hysteria. Foreign terrorists, older, hardened, each had his own complaints rooted in homeland struggles. The propaganda they used to facilitate their campaign falsely blamed historic slights by Christian Crusaders, American support for Israel, encroaching immorality from the West, the American overthrow of Sunni Minority rule in Iraq, and other things. But these were not the real causes.

On Tuesday, September 16, 2014, Kurdish peshmerga forces recaptured seven small Christian villages in northern Iraq in clashes with militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (DAESH), near Qaraqosh and Bartella, though these larger towns remained in Daesh control.

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