



Christian Freedom[®] International



IRAQI & SYRIAN REFUGEES IN CRISIS

MAY 2016

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3

TERROR IN THE NAME OF GOD



PHOTOS TAKEN FROM CFI'S MOST RECENT AID DELIVERY TO THE CHRISTIAN REFUGEES OF NORTHERN IRAQ

SINCE THE CHRISTIAN WINTER OF 2011, hundreds of thousands of Christians have become the specific targets of intense persecution by ISIS, the Taliban, Boko Haram, and other militant Islamic groups – extremists who have waged a holy war, or jihad, against all who oppose them. Extremists who declare time after time that their intention is to exterminate the entire population of Christians around the world. Christians are being kidnapped, enslaved, tortured, and murdered, with others forced to flee for their lives.

In Syria, the numbers are shocking: Before 2011, approximately 1.1

million Christians made up the Syrian population. According to a recent European Parliament resolution, more than 700,000 Believers have been displaced from their homes since the civil war began five years ago. While some still cling to the towns they call home, many thousands are tragically “unaccounted for.” As of November 2015, after the past five years of Syria’s civil war, the United States has admitted only 53 Syrian Christian refugees, and less than a dozen of the other religious minorities from that conflict combined. We need to pray for and help the displaced and endangered Christians who remain.





**PICTURED // SYRIAN
REFUGEE CHILDREN IN NEED**

IN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRY OF IRAQ, multitudes of Christians have been suffering the same fate. Many historic churches, monasteries, and entire Christian villages have been destroyed or burned to the ground, and even more Believers have been murdered for their faith. Like their fellow Christians in Syria, tens of thousands of Iraqi Believers have fled the persecution for safer regions within the country.

Nearly 2 million Christians once called this ancient country their home. We must help preserve the remnant who choose to remain.

According to a report published by the Center for American Progress, “Some of the oldest Christian communities in the world are disappearing in the very lands where their faith was born and first took root.” Yet some remain....and hope to return.

Despite the danger and persecution, the hundreds of thousands of Christians who have chosen to remain in these regions are praying fervently for the day when they will finally be able to return to the place they have called home all their lives.

Until that day, more than 125,000 Iraqi Believers live as refugees in the northern region of Kurdistan. Many are also praying to be reunited with the friends and family members they lost touch with after fleeing from their homes. CFI's co-workers made the journey to several of the largest refugee camps in the Duhok area of Kurdistan to help distribute desperately needed food, clothing, and school supplies.

“THESE DISPLACED CHRISTIANS KNOW WHAT SOLUTION THEY WANT AND IT IS NOT A U.N. RUN CAMP.

➤ A DIRE SITUATION: A CAMP IS NOT ENOUGH UNLESS IT IS ALSO SAFE

Refugee Christians live in camps in poor, substandard conditions. But the camps are not only materially unpleasant—they are dangerous and un-monitored.

There are numerous reports of Islamists coming in gangs, pretending to be regular refugees. The militants enter the camps, and they haven't left their Islamic extremist practices behind. They bring with them the brutality and culture of fear that ISIS demands of its members. The genuine refugees are afraid to report it if they see someone harassed, or even killed. If you ask for details, or witnesses they'll say 'I don't know, I was asleep', because there is no protection for them.

In the Erbil region, thousands of refugees are struggling for survival in old buildings which serve as temporary housing. One we visited was an abandoned cement factory. In these buildings, the refugees use the canvases supplied by the U.N. to divide sections of the buildings into

“private” sleeping and living areas. Many showers in these temporary housing units are without doors, failing to give refugees any privacy, security, or protection.

And just outside the old, dilapidated buildings, thousands more refugees are even more exposed, living in portable tents without reliable power, proper sanitation, or any controls over human predators.

These displaced Christians know what solution they want, and it is not a U.N. “run” camp. It is a safe zone around their existing cities, where they can live and govern themselves without the danger of being over-run by ISIS. They ask for a perimeter within which they can start to rebuild the demolished churches and schools and hospitals. The minority groups who huddle in the camps are well able to work together. They are used to compromise and being a small part of a larger whole.



PICTURED // THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT, THESE IRAQI REFUGEE CHILDREN WERE ABLE TO RECEIVE MUCH NEEDED AID & NECESSITIES LAST MONTH

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

HELP
us
KEEP
OTHERS
INFORMED
ABOUT
the
PERSECUTED
CHURCH

PLEASE
PASS THIS NEWSLETTER
ALONG WHEN YOU ARE
FINISHED READING IT.



**PICTURED // THROUGH YOUR
PRAYERS & SUPPORT, CFI IS
ABLE TO BRING HOPE TO
CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ**

CONTACT US!

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➤ During her travels, our co-worker spent a great deal of time with displaced families, women, and children, personally inspecting the camps and documenting the poor living conditions of many of these refugees. While many have been helped, the relief needs are still overwhelming. As long as the pathway remains open, CFI will continue to assist these Christian refugees in whatever way possible.

➤ Please continue to pray for the safety of persecuted Believers who have been forced from their homes, yet remain in Kurdistan, Iraq and Syria.

➤ CFI is also active in helping the Christian "Urban Refugee" community in Bangkok, Thailand, consisting of thousands of Pakistani families seeking asylum in a country where they can freely worship without fearing for their lives. Unfortunately, the U.N.H.C.R. in Bangkok systematically discriminates against Christians, making it impossible for them to be granted asylum and forcing them to live illegally in Bangkok slums.

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