



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN INTERNATIONAL

IRAQ

**10 YEARS SINCE THE ISIS INVASION
OF THE NINEVEH PLAINS**



PONTIFICAL
FOUNDATION





Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN INTERNATIONAL

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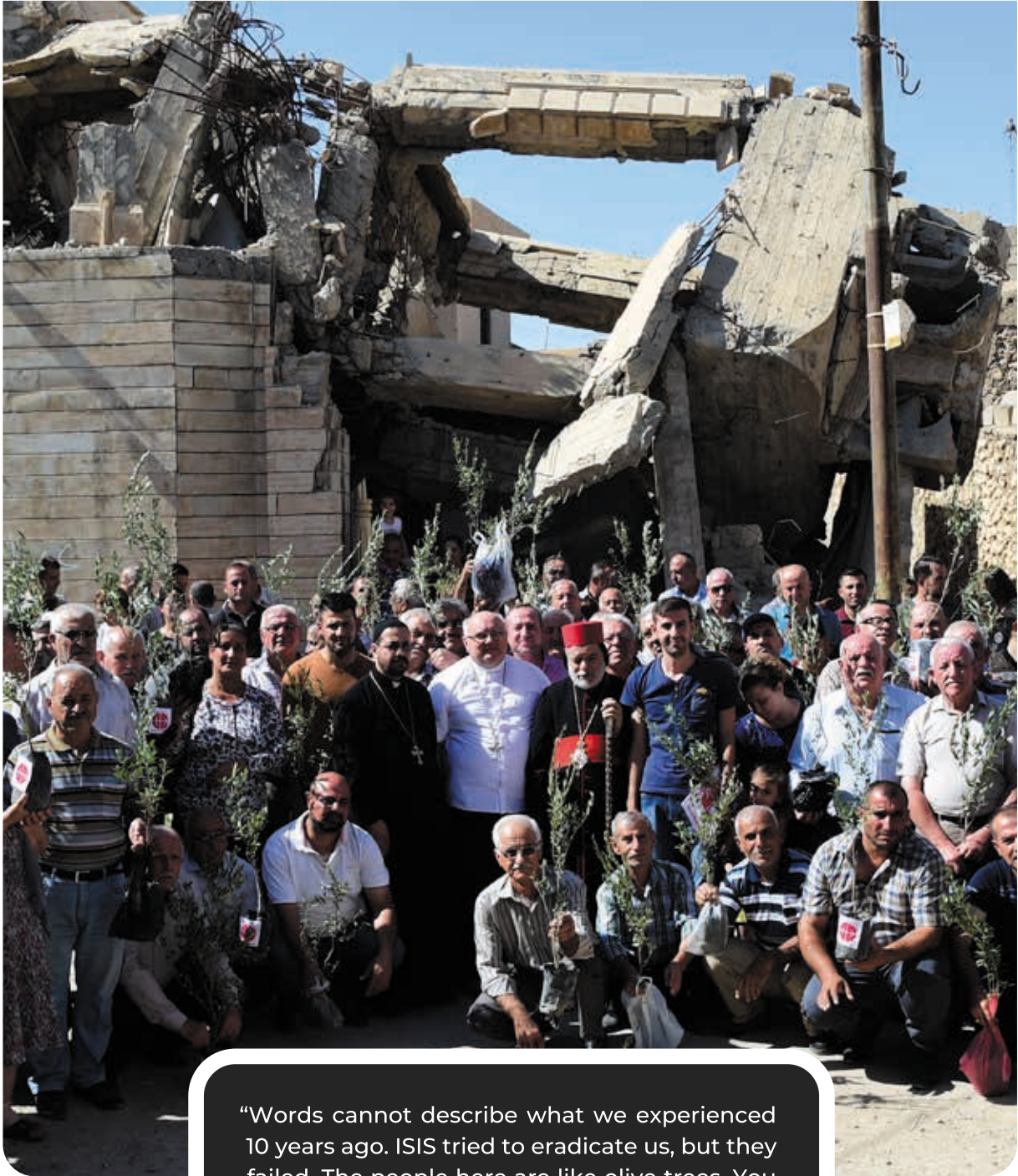
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“Words cannot describe what we experienced 10 years ago. ISIS tried to eradicate us, but they failed. The people here are like olive trees. You can cut them, burn them, but after 10 or 20 years they will continue to give fruit. They tried everything, but we remain, and as a Church we do everything to give a sign of hope.”

NIZAR SEMAAN

The Syriac Catholic Archbishop of Hadiab/Adiab, in Northern Iraq

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COUNTRY PROFILE

The Republic of IRAQ is divided into 19 provinces, four of which are part of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Government: Federal parliamentary republic.

In 2023, according to the UN, **Iraq had a population of 45.5 million.**

The capital (and largest city) is Baghdad. This is followed by Basra in the south and Mosul. Erbil is the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The official languages of Iraq are Arabic and Kurdish.

Religion: Muslim (official) 95-98% (Shia 61-64%, Sunni 29-34%), Christian 1% (includes Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Assyrian Church of the East), other 1-4% (2015 est.)¹. (Shia) Islam is the country's dominant religion.

Arabs are the largest ethnic community. Ethnic Kurds live mostly in the North where they established autonomy in the 1990s through the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG).



(1) CIA World Fact Book : www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iraq

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After World War I, Iraq passed from the failing Ottoman Empire to British control. The Kingdom of Iraq was established under the British Mandate in 1932.

In 1979, Saddam Hussein rose to power and established a brutal dictatorship. He was eventually toppled in 2003 (executed in 2006) when an American-British alliance invaded the country. Following the invasion, the country spiralled into a civil war between Sunnis and Shias. Due to the general turmoil and direct attacks, the presence of Christians shrunk considerably. Before 2003, the Christian community was estimated to have had as many as 1.5 million members. Today it is probably less than 250,000 people. Many Christians found refuge in the area controlled by the Kurdish government or left for the West.

In 2011, the American occupation ended. The influence of neighbouring Iran grew considerably since then, because the majority of the Iraqi population is Shia. The Sunnis, who had dominated during the Saddam regime, felt alienated. In 2014, largely due to the alienation of the Sunni minority, the radical Sunni terrorist group, ISIS, conquered a significant chunk of Northern Iraq, including Mosul, which became the group's capital. The jihadists also attacked Christians and other religious groups like the Yezidi. An international alliance drove ISIS out in 2017. Iraq has still not fully recovered from years of (civil) war and consequent economic hardship.



SHORT CONTEMPORARY HISTORY TIMELINE

1921 ▶ After World War I, Iraq passed from the failing Ottoman Empire to British control

1932 ▶ The Kingdom of Iraq was established under the British Mandate

1958 ▶ End of the monarchy

1979 ▶ Saddam Hussein establishes a dictatorship

1990 ▶ Iraq invades Kuwait

1991 ▶ An international coalition drives the Iraqi army out of Kuwait

2003 ▶ Saddam's regime toppled after an American-British invasion. Civil war begins

2004 ▶ Attacks on Christians by Islamist fanatics begin to escalate

2014 ▶ ISIS invades Northern Iraq and establishes a caliphate. On 6 August more than 100,000 Christians flee from the Nineveh Plains

2017 ▶ An international coalition defeats ISIS

2021 ▶ Pope Francis becomes the first Pope in history to visit Iraq

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal framework

Under Iraq's 2005 constitution, Islam is the official state religion and a "source of legislation". According to Article 2, nothing can contradict Islam, the principles of democracy or constitutionally recognized rights and freedoms. Under Article 2, the Islamic identity of most Iraqis and the religious rights of Christians, Yazidis, and Mandaean Sabeans enjoy equal protection.

Equality before the law is guaranteed under Article 14, "without discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, origin, colour, religion, sect, belief or opinion, or economic or social status." The state is bound by Article 3 to protect individuals "from intellectual, political and religious coercion".

Under Article 372 of the 1969 Penal Code, insulting religious beliefs, practices, symbols, or individuals seen as holy, worshipped or revered can be punished with imprisonment of up to three years or fines.

It is virtually impossible, although not technically illegal, for Muslims to convert to Christianity. Although there are several well documented instances of Muslims converting, all of them do so in secret or seek asylum overseas upon conversion. A convert to Christianity might be prosecuted under Iraq's anti-blasphemy law; more likely, they might be murdered by their family or local jihadist militants.

By law, nine seats out of 329 in the Council of Representatives (lower house of parliament) are reserved for members of minority groups: five seats for Christians from Baghdad, Nineveh, Kirkuk, Erbil, and Dohuk; a seat each for the Yazidis, Sabean-Mandaeans, and Shabaks, as well as one for Faili Kurds from Wasit. Also, in the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament, 11 out of 111 seats are reserved for religious and ethnic minorities.



Implementation

With equal citizenship for all Iraqis yet to be implemented, full religious freedom is not guaranteed. The prospects for the enjoyment of religious freedom and many other human rights remain dependent on the political and security stability of the country, both of which appear dubious.

A variety of laws discriminate against Christians living in Baghdad-controlled Iraq:



Marriage Law

It is illegal for Christian men to marry Muslim women without converting to Islam.



Parental Rights

Although Christian women are allowed to marry Muslim men, their children must be raised Muslim.



Legal Problems

Those living under the control of the Kurdish Regional Government also face similar legal problems.



See more:

<https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/iraq>





CHRISTIANITY IN IRAQ

The Christians of Iraq are one of the oldest continuous Christian communities in the world. Christianity was brought to Iraq in the 1st century.

Territories of today's Iraq are known from the Bible, the paradise of the Book of Genesis is believed to have been located there, as was the Tower of Babel. The story of Noah's flood is set in Iraq and Abraham was born in Ur of Chaldea, also in Iraq. Jacob and Rachel's meeting, the lion's den where Daniel was imprisoned, the furnace where the three Hebrew children were placed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; the events of the book of Esther, the prophetic activity of Amos and Ezekiel, all took place in the region as well.

Christians are overwhelmingly the descendants of the original inhabitants of the Assyrian Empire, a civilization that lasted from the 25th century BC until the 7th century AD when Islam arrived in the region. They are indigenous Eastern Aramaic-speakers. The most widely followed denomination in Iraq is the Chaldean Catholic Church, however, other communities of Syriac rite play an important role. Other rites, namely Armenian, Byzantine (Melkite) and Latin are also present.

Due to conflict between Kurds and the central government, in the 1970's many Christians fled Northern Iraq for Baghdad and other Iraqi cities like Basra only to return as the security situation deteriorated after the US invasion in 2003. The widespread terrorist attacks on churches in Baghdad and Mosul first began on Sunday, August

1 2004, when simultaneous bombing of six churches in Baghdad and Mosul was carried out, with the subsequent bombing of nearly thirty other churches throughout the country.

These developments unleashed several waves of refugees (both within the country and a massive emigration of Christians). The area under the control of the Kurdish regional government was the safest zone. As attacks on Christians increased after 2006 in Baghdad and other towns, more families turned northward to areas controlled by the Kurdish government. In February 2010, the attacks against Christians in Mosul forced 4,300 to flee to the Nineveh Plains.

The biggest hardships for Christians were inflicted by ISIS. On 9-10 June 2014, Iraq's second largest city Mosul fell to the radical Sunni group. On 29 June 2014, the so-called Islamic State officially announced the reestablishment of the Caliphate. In July that same year the last Christians left Mosul after receiving an ultimatum from ISIS militants with the following choices:

1. Conversion to Islam
2. Death by the sword in the event of the Jizya not being paid (Jizya is a per capita tax for non-Muslims)
3. Fleeing. On 6 August 2014, an ISIS advance in the Nineveh Plains forces between 100,000 and 120,000 Christians to flee, mostly to areas under Kurdish control.



With the territorial defeat of ISIS in late 2017, the country overcame the worst enemy of religious freedom in its recent history. This means that the general situation regarding religious freedom has improved significantly. But the threat has not been fully averted. Many ISIS fighters could not be arrested and have gone underground. They have also occasionally attacked religious minorities in recent years. For example, an overwhelming majority of Christians in the Nineveh Plains believe that ISIS is likely to return.

The most immediate security concern is the Iranian-backed militias in the Nineveh Plains. These mostly Shiite militias helped

defeat ISIS. Some Christians accuse them of corruption and human rights abuses. Turkish interventions in northern Iraq targeting PKK militants affect various religious minorities such as Christians and Yazidis. Since the beginning of 2020, residents of dozens of Christian villages in northern Iraq have been forced to leave their villages.

All locations in the Nineveh Plains, the Christian heartland, fall into Iraq's disputed territories, claimed by both the Kurdish Regional Government and the Central Government in Baghdad. In theory, a vote should regularise this situation, but there is no sign of such a referendum on the horizon. At the moment Baghdad controls the area.



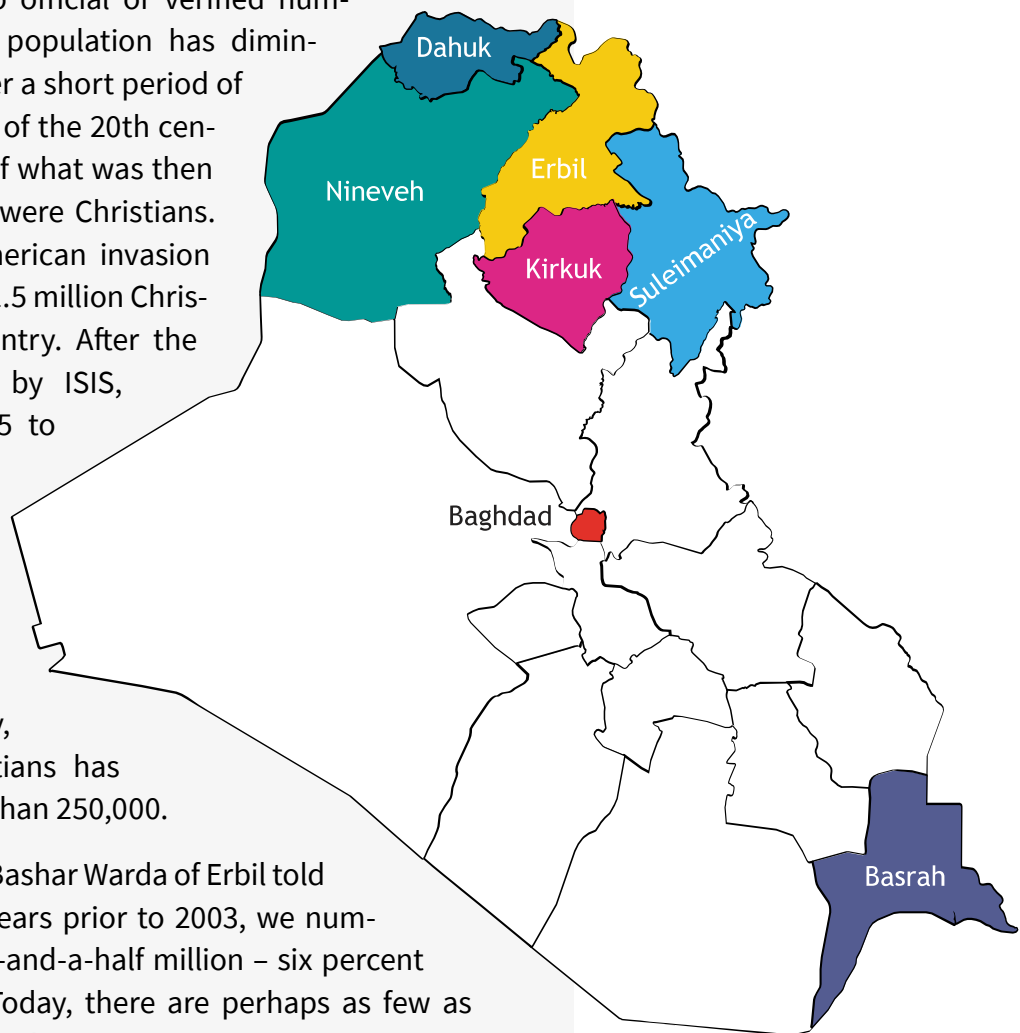
STATISTICS RELATED TO CHRISTIANS

Iraqi Christians, among other communities, live primarily in:

- The capital Baghdad
- The southern city of Basra
- and predominantly in the north, especially in the provinces of Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk as well as in the province of Ninewa with the Nineveh Plain, where many Christian towns and villages are located.

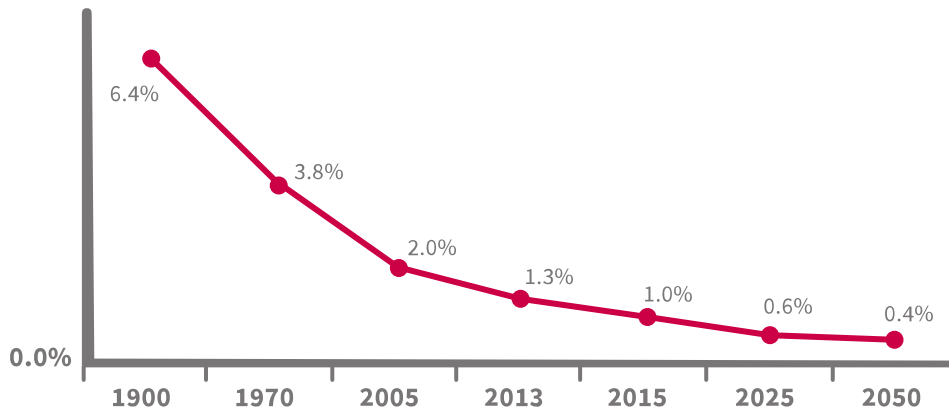
Although there are no official or verified numbers, Iraq's Christian population has diminished considerably over a short period of time. At the beginning of the 20th century about 6 percent of what was then an Ottoman province were Christians. Prior to the Anglo-American invasion in 2003, an estimated 1.5 million Christians lived in the country. After the atrocities committed by ISIS, numbers sank in 2015 to perhaps 300,000. More and more Christians left for Western countries like Canada, the USA or European Union member states. Today, the number of Christians has shrunk further to less than 250,000.

Chaldean Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil told ACN in 2019: "In the years prior to 2003, we numbered as many as one-and-a-half million – six percent of Iraq's population. Today, there are perhaps as few as 250,000 of us left. Maybe less."



IRAQ Christian Population in Decline

Christians share of Iraqi Population, Projected to 2050



*1900 data reflect current borders; time units are not uniform.

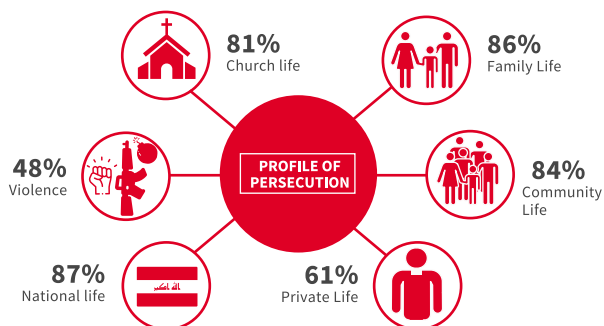
Data: World Religion Database, Brill, 2014, Eds. Johnson & Grim

Chart: The Weekly Number, Brian J. Grim, Aug. 19, 2014

CHRISTIANS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Christian Martyrs 2004-2014

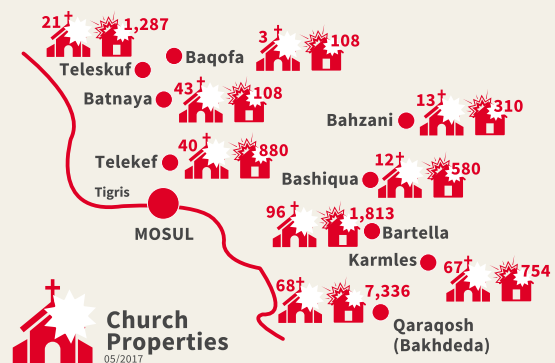
1,107 Christians killed
15 Priests killed
 53 died in the Our Lady of Salvation church in Baghdad in 2010.



ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS IN 11/2016 - 10/2018

169 Christians attacked (8 killed, 17 arrested)
6,010 Christian-owned houses and shops attacked
13 Churches attacked

Destruction in the Nineveh Plains (without Mosul)



34 Totally destroyed
132 burnt
197 Partially damaged

Total **363** including

46 Churches, chapels, shrines
18 Convents and monasteries
10 Cemeteries
9 Parish offices

Christian Private houses
 11/2018

1,040 Totally destroyed
3,292 Burnt
9,703 Partially damaged

Total **14,035**

The Catholic Church is the biggest in the country. It consists of different rites. The most numerous is the Chaldean Church whose head is Patriarch Cardinal Louis Raphael I Sako of Baghdad. But there are also other Catholic rites, such as the Syriac Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Melkite and Roman Catholic Churches. The three latter ones are mostly located in Baghdad. There is also a small Catholic presence in Basra in Southern Iraq.

POPE FRANCIS' VISIT TO IRAQ

Pope Francis' visit to Iraq in 2021 offered a glimpse of hope. Francis was the first Pope ever to travel to Iraq and was welcomed by the heads of state and the government. He visited Bagdad, Erbil, Najaf, Qaraqosh, Ur, and Mosul. During the visit, he met with Shia leader Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Husayni Al-Sistani and attended a gathering at the House of Abraham in Ur.

On the flight back to Rome, Pope Francis recalled how he had been deeply moved by his experience:

“What did I encounter in Iraq, in Qaraqosh? I had not imagined the ruins of Mosul, of Qaraqosh; I had not imagined, truly... Yes, I had seen pictures, I had read the book, but I was struck, it was striking. And then, what touched me the most is the testimony of a mother in Qaraqosh. The testimony was given by a priest who truly knows poverty, service and penance, and by a woman who lost her son in the first Daesh bombings. She said one word: forgiveness.

I was moved. A mother who says: I forgive and I ask forgiveness for them. I was reminded of my journey to Colombia, of that encounter at Villavicencio, where so many people, women especially, mothers and wives, recounted their experience of the murder of their sons and their husbands and said: ‘I forgive’. But we have forgotten this word; we are experts at insulting; we are great at condemning, myself before anyone; we know this well. But to forgive! To forgive enemies: this is pure Gospel. That is what struck me most in Qaraqosh.”

ACN's Executive President Regina Lynch, who accompanied His Holiness during the historic trip, has commented on some of the fruits of the Pope's visit: “I saw how moved and encouraged the Christians were by the Pope's visit. A hope that seems to be lasting. A bishop told me that for the first time many Iraqis discovered that Iraqi Christians were descended from the original Assyrians, and were not people who had come later with the crusaders. I will never forget the scenes in Qaraqosh. It was such a contrast to the suffering we saw in Erbil in 2014. There was real joy with the Holy Father's visit.”



1



- 1 ACN calls on international community to help Iraq attain stability and economic development
- 2 Pope Francis' press conference on the return flight to Rome

2



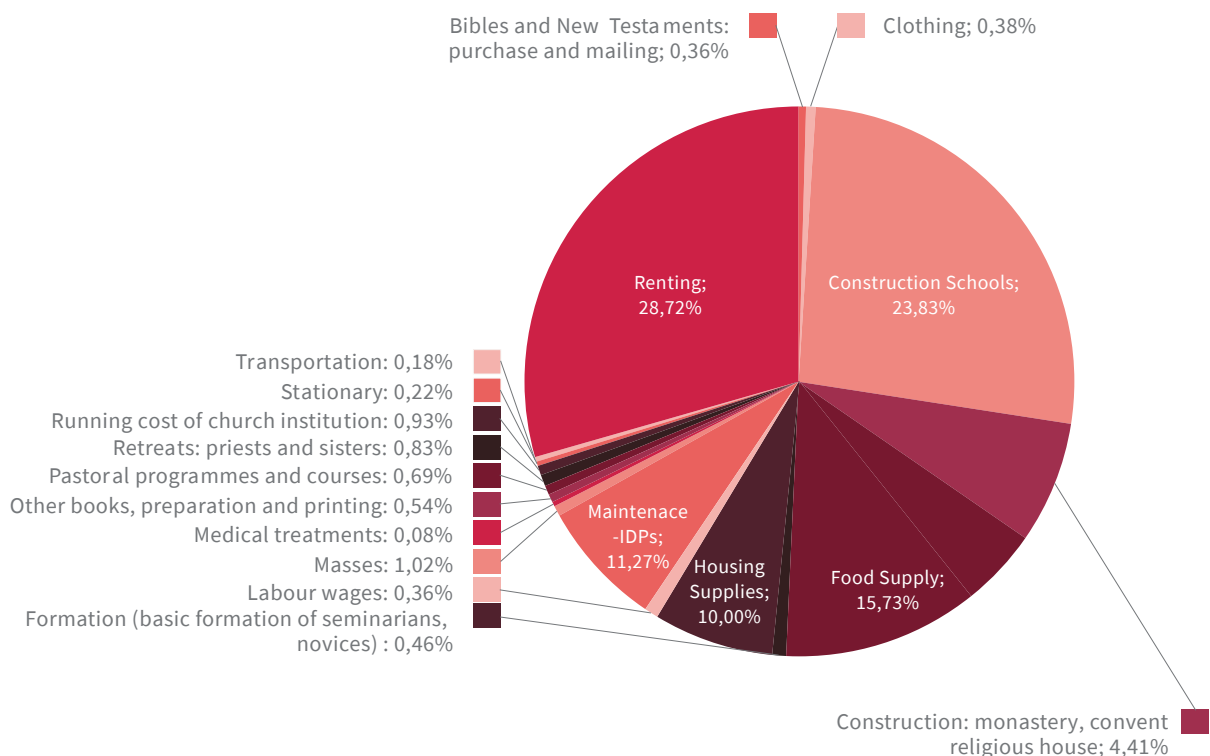
ACN'S HELP TO CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has been supporting the Church in Iraq since 1972, initially focusing on the oppression of Christians in northern Iraq. During this period, ACN primarily supported the pastoral mission by providing mass stipends for priests, training and forming seminarians, constructing church facilities, and distributing religious literature such as Bibles and catechism books. Social projects, like a mobile clinic for rural areas, were occasional rather than regular initiatives at that time.

In 2014, ISIS attacks drastically shifted ACN's efforts towards emergency aid. ACN supported around 95,000 refugees from Mosul and the Nineveh plains. Key actions included:

- Setting up temporary schools and emergency shelters
- Providing food, blankets, and sanitary installations
- Paying teachers' salaries and rent for refugees
- Supporting religious sisters and priests who were also displaced

Emergency aid after the outbreak of the war August 2014 - June 2015





By the end of 2017, ACN's aid ensured the survival of about **11,800 Christian families** and the **schooling of 7,200 children**.

Between August 2016 and July 2017 Iraq was liberated from ISIS rule, but the group left destruction behind. Post-ISIS, the focus shifted to reconstruction. The "Return to the Roots" campaign, initiated in 2017, aimed to rebuild the Nineveh Plains. ACN supported the restoration of nearly 3,000 homes and covered electricity costs for returning families. By 2020, about 40,700 people had returned to their villages. From there, the next phase involved rebuilding and repairing the 363 church buildings affected by the war.

Reconstruction is key to the future of Christianity in the Middle East and a sign of hope. These buildings are crucial to the social fabric and the healing of returning Christians and to peace in the region, as they have a social or welfare support function, like parish halls that serve as community centres for pastoral and social activities, educational facilities, orphanages, residential care homes, clinics, and convents. From 2018 to 2020, ACN approved a total of 44 projects to contribute to the rebuilding of churches and chapels, convents, orphanages and kindergartens, as well as Parish and Community Halls in the towns of Nineveh.

ACN has been deeply committed to restoring Christian life in Northern Iraq and has helped fund many reconstruction projects to help Iraq and the Christians there achieve the stability needed for the population to stabilise and not seek a better life abroad.



ACN'S IRAQ PROJECTS SINCE 2014

Year	Construction	Pastoral	Grand Total
2014	7	28	35
2015	9	45	54
2016	3	23	26
2017	14	15	29
2018	12	18	30
2019	40	18	58
2020	1	10	11
2021	13	18	31
2022	17	26	43
2023	11	21	32



“Without ACN, our situation would be different now. ACN played a crucial role in helping to provide Christians with a good standard of life, in restoring houses, churches, monasteries, and supporting other activities which can help Christians to remain in Iraq. It has done a really great job, and I am sure it will continue to do a great job in the future.” (Archbishop Nizar, 2024)*

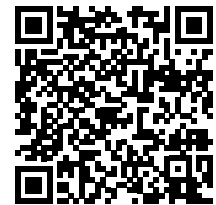
Read More: [“We want to be treated as Iraqi citizens, because we are people of this country” - ACN International](#)



With the support of Aid to the Church in Need, the three main Christian Churches of the Nineveh Plains region [the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Syriac Catholic Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church], united in the **Nineveh Reconstruction Committee (NRC)**, jointly called:

1. To facilitate the return of Christians to their respective ancestral communities from which they were expelled during the ISIS invasion of 2014-17. The effect of that help can be measured: ACN has completed the renovation of 2,086 of a total of 8,458 houses financed. This programme, worth more than 9 million CAD, restored houses in Baghdida, Bartella, Tesqopa, Karamless, Bashiqa and Bahzani.

2. To secure the presence of a permanent cluster of Christians through efforts aiming at legal protection of Christians and other minorities, their fundamental human rights, especially equal citizenship.
3. To secure the thriving of the Christian minority through funding and support of education and development projects. As recently as 2022, ACN set up a scholarship programme for the Catholic University in Erbil.



FROM 2021 UNTIL NOW

“Speaking on behalf of all the people – especially the minorities, who tend to suffer more than others, especially in conflict situations – please God, no more war.”

Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil (2023)

The overwhelming generosity of ACN’s benefactors for Iraq has borne fruit. Our help in Iraq has been slowly declining in the last 10 years. This is a sign that the rebuilding of Christian homes and Church structures has set a solid foundation for Christians to stand firm and for us to now focus on the faith life of families and the youth. This effort has increased their resilience and is helping move them towards gradual self-sufficiency. This is a positive sign, that also speaks about an improvement of the conditions for Christians in the region and the community itself. (The graphic is in Euros)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Amount (thousand euro)	206,93	4.664,15	10.699,38	9.764,91	9.290,50	6.758,72
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Amount (thousand euro)	5.574,87	1.544,92	3.054,87	2.776,69	2.446,15	56.782,08

From 2013 to 2023, ACN financed around 447 projects for a total value of 79.49 million CAD in total. Of which, more than 122 projects (11.59 million CAD) correspond to the period between 2021 and 2023, mainly in construction (37.7%), pastoral aid (32.79%) and humanitarian aid (13.11%).

With the return of all these Christians, the reconstruction of Church buildings began: these spaces have restored pastoral life and the practice of faith in the repopulated territories of Iraq. While ACN-supported projects continue to focus on rebuilding infrastructure, the impact has extended

beyond Mosul and the Nineveh Plains to regions where many Christians who were displaced have remained and need a place to practice their faith.

The existence of new buildings and renewed Christian communities has brought stability to the lives of the faithful, making it possible to resume pastoral activities. This change is clearly shown by the increase in the proportion of the number of pastoral projects, which by 2023 represented 45% of the total projects, while pastoral projects represented only 17% of the total in 2020.



SOME FIGURES REGARDING ACN'S HELP IN IRAQ IN 2023

41 PROJECTS PAID FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF 3.424.609 CAD



Construction / Church buildings

43.2%



Construction / Kindergarten

18.8%



Transportation

0.9%



Emergency aid / Education: CUE

15.1%



Pastoral formation

17.0%



Subsistence aid

2.1%



Media **2.4%**



Masses **0.5%**

Iraq remains in our Top 10 countries supported by ACN in 2024



THANK YOU!!



I want to stay in Iraq. I want my future to be in Iraq, and I want to help build the future of Iraq.

Basma Adwar

Scholarship beneficiary



CARING FOR THE **FUTURE OF IRAQ**

In addition to funding projects aimed at reviving pastoral life through infrastructure provision, ACN has placed special emphasis on the education and welfare of the youth. Restoring Christian life in Iraq is a significant commitment to achieving the stability needed for the people to feel secure and to deter them from seeking a better life abroad. Towards this goal, since 2021, ACN has implemented two scholarship projects with the Catholic University in Erbil. The goal of the projects is to equip young people with the necessary skills to enter the job market and create new employment opportunities within their own country.

Under the banner of the “**Pope Francis Scholarship**”, a cohort of 128 students, comprising 113 Christians, 12 Yazidi and 3 Muslims, supported by ACN, have started the academic year of 2022/2023 at Erbil’s Catholic University. Thus, ACN helped perpetuate the Pope’s legacy in Iraq through higher education. <https://acninternational.org/acn-helps-perpetuate-the-popes-legacy-in-iraq-through-higher-education/>



Another significant construction projects seeks to support education of Christians and families. Christians should be well educated to find stable employment, but working parents need assistance to care for their little ones. Also, in a country where the Christian minority often faces discrimination, ACN contributes that Christian parents send their children to a school to have a Catholic oriented education.



In 2022, Al-Tahira Secondary School opened on 1 May in Qaraqosh (Baghdada), the largest of the 13 majority Christian towns and villages in the iconic Nineveh Plains. Five years in the making, the school is one of the single biggest projects in Iraq supported by Aid to the Church in Need. <https://acninternational.org/iraq-new-catholic-school/>



Mar Qardakh School is a flagship in Ankawa, a fee-paying school established in 2011 by the Chaldean Archdiocese with 460 pupils, of whom 109 are kindergarteners. The school offers education from Kindergarten to Twelfth Grade and was the first in Kurdistan to adopt the International Baccalaureate curriculum. In 2023, ACN supported the school's expansion as an expression of the resilience and hope of Iraqi Christians, so that they can remain and thrive in their homeland. By investing in the education and formation of young Christians, the school plays a vital role in preserving the community's presence and strengthening its foundation for generations to come. <https://acninternational.org/iraq-acn-helps-catholic-school-build-a-new-kindergarten/>



REINFORCING IRAQ'S FAITH - PASTORAL CARE

Youth is very important to the Church; it represents hope and the future of the faith. One of the projects funded through ACN is directed to the young, to gather them and provide them with pastoral and social activities, to form a strong social safety net and reaffirm their sense of belonging as Christians.

One of the most representative projects of the reconstruction of the Church and how it represents a return to an active pastoral life in Iraq during the period 2021/2023, is the **Pope Francis Pastoral Centre, Duhok**.



In Summer 2023, the new Pastoral Centre was inaugurated as a sign of hope for a better future in Iraq. The ground floor of this new three-story building will be dedicated to diocesan activities such as Radio Mary, a listening centre, the Mother Teresa fraternity for the poor and the sick, a museum, archives, and other services, as well as an office to receive guests. ACN helped make this project a reality. <https://acninternational.org/new-pastoral-centre-is-a-sign-of-hope-for-a-better-future-in-iraq>



In Summer 2023, a gathering of almost two thousand young Christians in Ankawa provided hope for the future and encouraged the new generations to stay and invest in their country and in their community. ACN helped make the Ankawa Youth Meeting a reality.

<https://acninternational.org/young-christians-gathered-in-iraq-to-rebuild-the-church/>



Other pastoral projects have gained importance in Iraq as well. Stability has allowed ACN to support many other pastoral projects like catechesis and religious education, pastoral support, youth and family engagement, musical activities, and community services. The catechesis programmes such as the “Grow in Faith” initiative and various catechism courses in Sulaimaniyah indicate a strong emphasis on religious education for children and youth. Initiatives like the First Communion preparation course for 1000 children and the catechism summer school in Bartella highlight efforts to prepare young members of the community for the sacraments.

CHURCH RECONSTRUCTION

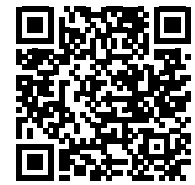
At the beginning of 2023, the new Convent of Saint Joseph was inaugurated in Batnaya, one of the Christian communities hit hardest by ISIS. The new Convent of the Dominican sisters was built largely with financial support from Aid to the Church in Need. <https://acninternational.org/iraq-new-convent-gives-hope-to-christians/>



Over the past years, the St. Behnam's Church in Baghdeda has been undergoing restoration after being damaged and partially destroyed by ISIS. The interior was completed in 2022. With the financial help of Aid to the Church in Need, work has finally begun on the exterior as well. <https://acninternational.org/restored-church-in-iraq-gives-hope-to-christians/>



After heavy damage caused by ISIS, St Kyriakos's Chaldean Catholic Church in Batnaya was restored with the help of ACN in 2022. Thus, the Christian community had added cause for rejoicing on Easter 2022 when their church opened for services for the first time since the building was desecrated by ISIS militants years before. <https://acninternational.org/iraq-batnayas-resurrection-day/>





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More information: acninternational.org

prayer for peace in **IRAQ**

Lord, the plight of our country is deep and the suffering of the Christians is heavy and frightening us, therefore we ask you, Lord, to assign our lives, grant us patience and courage to continue to witness our Christian values with trust and hope.

Lord, peace is base of any life; give us peace and stability to live with each other without fear, anxiety, with dignity and joy, glory to you forever.

† **Louis Raphael I Sako**

Chaldean Catholic Patriarch

