

# Champion of Persecuted Christians Receives Prestigious Award

Nadine Maenza is a fighter. She fights for persecuted Christians and other religious minorities throughout the world, but she does not do it just from her office in Washington, D.C., but by spending time on the ground with the people, seeing and experiencing for herself the suffering of those she defends.

Just last week, Maenza received the Cedars of God Award by In Defense of Christians for “combatting Christian persecution around the world.”

Maenza is the newly elected chair of the congressionally chartered United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, formed in 1998 as part of the International Religious Freedom Act, launched by former Congressman Frank Wolf, Sen. Sam Brownback and others, and is bringing a breath of fresh air to a critically important organization.

With more than 20 years of experience supporting those in need, Maenza is an expert on policy as well as a writer and speaker in the forefront of the fight for the suffering.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom works closely with the office of International Religious Freedom at the State Department and the ambassador for International Religious Freedom. It also collects information from a wide range of organizations ranging from Open Doors to the Barnabas Fund to Christian Solidarity Worldwide and many others in a network that is able to immediately mobilize help for ongoing persecution, with a weekly roundtable meeting coordinating efforts worldwide.

"I have an open door to this administration for many of the efforts we are involved with and have been impressed at the level of expertise as well as personal concern I have experienced in my interactions with them," Maenza says, giving some surprising good news for the many concerned at the perceived lack of public support for persecuted Christians and others under the new administration.

Carlo Ganjeh, newly elected secretary general of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, the historic worldwide organization that since 1968 has represented Assyrians worldwide, says, "Nadine Maenza has been a tireless supporter not only for our people in the region, but for the many persecuted, and it is an honor to be able to work with and support her efforts as she does ours."

"I have been to Iraq countless times to assist the Assyrian Christians, Yazidis and others as well as to Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Bahrain, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Taiwan, to mention just a few, working, in particular since my appointment in 2018 to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom," Maenza says.

Most recently, USCIRF strongly condemned the Turkish bombing of indigenous Assyrians in their homeland in Northern Iraq as well as of those targeting the Yazidis in Sinjar. Maenza has also been deeply involved with the situation in Afghanistan, both with rescues and urging the U.S. and other countries to resettle religious minorities.

The first Sunday of November is designated as the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, reminding believers that approximately 300 million Christians live under persecution. An estimated 13 people are martyred every day for their faith, and a recent U.K. government report stated that approximately 80% of those persecuted in the world are Christians. Nearly 80% of the persecuted reside in Muslim

nations, with 56 members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation assisting Muslims enduring persecution, but only two nations—Poland and Hungary—legally required to protect Christians worldwide.

A committed believer, Maenza asks the church to pray for her and for the efforts of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. She also urges believers and their churches to make prayer for and working on behalf of persecuted believers not just a once-a-year event but to become involved personally. She is always available to speak at churches, schools and events on behalf of the persecuted.

“In spite of the difficulties worldwide, I am encouraged by the growing awareness and expertise not only in governments, but in the private sector and the growing movement to respond to and stop persecution as it develops worldwide,” Maenza says. {eoa}

**Amir George** directs the World Helpline at . He urges anyone who wants to be a part of daily prayer on Capitol Hill at 7:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. to contact [thewhitehouseprayerteam@](mailto:thewhitehouseprayerteam@).

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