

'Christians Are Seen as Enemies': Terror Attacks Create More Suffering for Christians

Recent events in the Middle East are causing additional hardship and suffering for Christians in Yemen.

For years, the tiny group of believers there have withstood intense persecution from militant Muslims and their government. Now, the attacks on ships and other actions of Houthi rebels are making matters worse.

The Houthi movement began about 30 years ago as an insurgency against the Sunni Muslim government. Armed by Iran, the Shia Muslim militia is crucial to Tehran's strategy to dominate the Middle East and control shipping lanes by restricting access to the Red Sea.

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During recent testimony before Congress, former CIA intelligence analyst and Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, Dr. Kenneth Pollack said the Houthis share Iran's goal of destroying Israel and driving the United States and its allies out of the Middle East.

"The Houthis have proven themselves to be belligerent, aggressive and convinced that violence is the best way to get what they want," Pollack insisted. "They are forces of oppression inside Yemen and forces of aggression beyond it."

Yemen's small but growing community of Christians is among those targeted by the Houthis.

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“The Christians in this area are folks that were formerly Muslim–Muslim background believers that have converted to Christianity. Christians are obviously a despised, minority,” explained Open Doors U.S. CEO Ryan Brown.

Brown’s group lists Yemen as the world’s fifth worst persecutor of Christians on its 2024 World Watch list.

He said years of war had left the people largely dependent upon outside aid. So, when shipping lanes are disrupted, food and other necessities are slow to reach Middle Eastern ports, driving up costs and Christians – those refusing to wage jihad or engage in Islamic practices are marginalized.

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