

Christians Reportedly Denied Bibles, Forced to Observe Ramadan in Prison

A newly released report submitted to the United Nations is shining a spotlight on what advocates describe as a troubling pattern of religious persecution unfolding in post-Assad Syria.

According to the report, Christians and other religious minorities have been detained without due process, denied access to Scripture and Christian symbols, and, in some cases, forced to participate in Islamic religious practices while behind bars.

According to The Jerusalem Post, the allegations come from a report by Christian Solidarity International (CSI) that was presented to the U.N. Human Rights Council. CSI contends that Syria's Transitional Government has arbitrarily detained members of minority communities and that some of the arrests appear to be motivated, at least in part, by the detainees' religious or ethnic identities.

The organization also alleges that families have been pressured to pay money in exchange for the release of loved ones.

The report arrives as Syria continues navigating the difficult transition following the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's government. While acknowledging the country's responsibility to investigate crimes committed under the former regime, CSI argues that the current detention process has left thousands imprisoned without formal charges or judicial proceedings, according to The Jerusalem Post.



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Among the cases highlighted is Suleiman Khalil, the former mayor of the predominantly Christian town of Sadad.

According to CSI, as reported by The Jerusalem Post, Khalil was arrested in February 2025 and remains imprisoned without being formally charged or given access to legal counsel. His family reportedly has received little information regarding the evidence against him.

CSI further alleges that Khalil has been denied treatment for ongoing medical conditions while being held in Homs Central Prison and has been prevented from freely practicing his Syriac Orthodox Christian faith.

Family members also claim prison officials prohibited them from bringing him a Bible or a cross during the rare visits they were permitted to make. Female relatives were reportedly required to wear a hijab and abaya before entering the prison, and Khalil was allegedly compelled to fast during Ramadan despite being a Christian, according to the organization's report.

The report is a reminder that while many Christians freely open God's Word each day, others are being denied even the opportunity to hold a Bible. It is also a call for the global church to continue praying for persecuted believers, advocating for religious liberty and standing in solidarity with brothers and sisters in Christ who continue to endure hardship because of their faith.

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