

Cold-Blooded ISIS Killer Calls Jesus Lord

Syrian militants are among refugees fleeing to other countries, and they don't leave their Islamic extremist practices behind. They have brought brutality and a culture of fear into some refugee camps, the director of a ministry in the Middle East said.

In United Nations camps in Jordan, Islamist gangs bring the same practices that refugees have fled: coercion to join terrorist groups such as the Islamic State (ISIS), conflict between militias on both sides of the civil war and the criminal buying and selling of females as sex slaves.

"The Muslim gangs come as refugees, but they have their agendas," said the ministry director, whose name is withheld for security reasons. "They're like a mafia. People are even killed inside the camps, and the refugees are afraid to say if they saw somebody get killed. If you ask them, they'll say, 'I don't know, I was asleep.'"

Formed in 1990 to bring the gospel to Arabs in several countries in the Middle East, the ministry began providing food parcels, medicines and other aid to refugees from Syria in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon after civil war broke out in Syria in 2011. It also provides aid to displaced people within Syria.

Only 20 percent of the Syrian refugees in Jordan are living in refugee camps, he said, and the ministry has found a larger harvest of souls among Syrians outside the camps; most in Jordan have managed to find apartments subsidized by aid organizations.

U.N. refugee camps offer little refuge, he said.

"The last time I went inside a camp, I had a policeman with me," the ministry director said. "The camps are dangerous because they have ISIS, Iraqi militias and Syrian militias. It's another place for gangs. They're killing inside the camps, and they're buying and selling ladies and even girls."

Inside the camps, ISIS treats the men much as they do in Syria—telling them that they will either swear allegiance to the caliphate or be killed, he said. ISIS militants try to do in secret what they did openly in Syria.

In territory claimed by the ISIS caliphate in Syria, he said, the militants call all the men of an occupied town or village to the town center.

"If you're a man and you stay home when they call, you're killed," the director said. "So you go out and they tell you the rules: Why they're there, and how they're going to give you a chance to be a real Muslim, because they say they know how to make real Muslims."

If someone consents to join the caliphate, but the militants sense that his heart is not really with them, they will also kill him for that, he added. Likewise, if they call out the men and they realize that someone knows his neighbor is hiding but doesn't turn him in, the one who doesn't reveal his neighbors' whereabouts will be beheaded, he said.

"No one could flee from their hands," he said. "They don't ask you. They bring you to the middle of town and they gather everyone—this happens almost every day—and they say, 'He hid his neighbor and he knew about it,' and they cut his head off in front of everyone."

In Jordan, ISIS members—whether coerced or voluntary—and other Syrian militants may be found outside the refugee camps, but they are less able to impose their reign of terror on society as a whole. Signs of the ISIS presence outside the camps are more subtle.

"Many refugee women have husbands who are with ISIS in Syria," the director said. "We find these poor women with expensive iPads, so how did they get them? Their husbands who are in ISIS are sending money to them. We still want to reach them for Christ, of course."

Reaching any Middle Eastern Muslim, much less one associated with ISIS, with the gospel is a delicate, gradual process, and the ministry's 32 full-time workers and 400 volunteers throughout the region are trained to initiate relationships, answer doubts, share the good news of Christ's salvation and develop disciples.

One member of ISIS from northern Syria came to visit his relatives who had fled to Jordan because he had heard Christians were providing them aid, the director said. He intended to kill the Christian workers providing aid to his relatives, who were not living in a refugee camp. After hearing the gospel and witnessing the love of the Christians, he put his trust in Christ.

"He first saw how Islam brainwashed him about Christianity, and how that contrasted with the reality of what he saw in the Christians," the director said. "And we're talking about an area of Jordan that has three Salafist [a strict, fundamentalist branch of Sunni Islam] mosques. They raise up people to go and fight."

The former Muslim extremist militant was so enthusiastic in sharing his faith with the Salifis that he quickly put himself in danger, he said.

"He even got threats from them, and that's when I began trying to calm him down, because otherwise they may kill him," the director said. "They may take him and create a big threat among the refugees. We need to work very quietly and slowly."

Showing the love of Christ is the starting point for gospel outreach, and that is how the ministry has undertaken its

vision of fulfilling Christ's commission to make disciples of the unreached. Founded originally to reach Arabs by Arabs, it has expanded its vision to reach Bedouins, Gypsies, Druze, Kurds and Alawites.

"We have had to follow some clever methods that outweigh the intelligence of any of us," he said. "We certainly know that God is behind these methods. We have witnessed the fruit and many great experiences throughout these years that made us realize that God is the one leading us."

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