

EU Official to Finally Recognize ISIS Systematic Killing of Christians as Genocide

On Wednesday, Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy High Representative Federica Mogherini will make a declaration on the plight of Christians in the Middle East during the plenary session of the European Parliament. Following this, in the first week of February, Parliament is expected to vote on a resolution concerning the situation in Syria and Iraq, where Christians and other religious minorities are being abducted, tortured, raped and killed by members of the so-called Islamic State.

“We welcome that Ms. Mogherini and the Members of Parliament are addressing the situation of Christians in the Middle East and encourage them to call the atrocities against Christians and other religious minorities in Syria and Iraq by its name: genocide,” said ADF International Director of EU Advocacy Sophia Kuby. “Christians in the Middle East urgently need this recognition to wake up the world to what is going on. In contrast to other diplomatic notions such as ‘systematic mass murder,’ ‘genocide’ is an internationally recognized legal term. It is necessary to call for further steps, such as a resolution at the U.N. Security Council and a referral to the International Criminal Court.”

International law sets out clear criteria for when it is accurate to call a situation genocide. The U.N. Genocide Convention of 1948 states that acts need to be committed with “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” It needs to involve the intentional killing of members of a group, causing serious

bodily or mental harm to its members, or deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

The number of Christians has dropped from million to 500,000 in Syria and from 1.4 million to less than 275,000 in Iraq in just a few years.

“All necessary criteria are fulfilled in order to recognize this as genocide,” Kuby said. “To deny this only adds to the horrendous suffering that people are already experiencing.”