

ISIS Tortures Christian to Death for Refusing to Convert to Islam

Salem Matty Georgis, a 43-year-old Christian from Bartella [also Bartalah], Iraq was beaten to death for refusing to convert to Islam. This represents just the latest atrocity committed by the group which labels itself "The Islamic State" (known also as ISIS or ISIL).

Georgis remained in the Syriac Christian town of Bartella after it fell under the control of ISIS on Aug. 7. He "was suffering from heart disease and couldn't leave Bartalah with his family when the town [was] occupied by the terrorist Islamic State because of his illness," a relative told the Anakawa news site.

Georgis had remained in hiding in his home for three weeks, surviving only on what was left in his house. When everything was depleted, he left his home in search of food, his relative continued. Apparently, he was confronted by an ISIS patrol in front of the Church of the Virgin Mary.

"The patrol arrests him and tried to force him to convert to Islam, but he completely refused. Thus, the militants beat him and tortured him until he died in their hands," Ankawa reported.

"Exactly we don't know why in this situation they killed this man," William Warda of the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization told International Christian Concern. "Generally they have allowed people to leave, without money or documents, but alive."

Warda met Monday with a family who had just reached the Kurdish-controlled area after being robbed and escorted out of

Al-Hamdaniya, which is in the same district as Bartella.

"Go to [Masoud] Barzani, he will protect you," the family was told according to Warda, as they were driven out of the district and then forced to walk, before eventually finding help and being able to contact relatives.

ISIS is known for its brutality which has included mass executions, particularly of Shia and military figures. They have also released video showing public beheadings, including those of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff.

"The reports we have received reveal acts of inhumanity on an unimaginable scale," Flavia Pansieri, the deputy high commissioner for Human Rights said in her opening remarks to the U.N. Human Rights Council's special session on Iraq on Monday, the same day that Georgis was beaten to death in Bartella.

"The massacres and abductions being carried out by the Islamic State provide harrowing new evidence that a wave of ethnic cleansing against minorities is sweeping across northern Iraq," said Donatella Rovera, Amnesty International's senior crisis response adviser in the release of a report documenting the ethnic cleansing of and systematic targeting of Iraq's religious minorities.

More than 1.2 million people are believed to have been displaced since mid-June as a result of the advances of ISIS in western and central Iraq.

"The international community cannot remain silent about the existential threat that Iraq's Christian communities are facing," says Todd Daniels, ICC regional manager for the Middle East. "We are witnessing the emptying of Christians from their homelands. We applaud the United Nations for meeting regarding these human rights abuses, but in the face of such horrific violence, action must be taken to ensure the protection of these communities."

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