

# Islamic State Atrocities Against Christians Is Genocide, EU Declares

The European Parliament has declared the violent campaign by the so-called Islamic State against Christians and other religious minorities to be genocide.

“Daesh commits genocide,” according to the resolution passed Feb. 4 by a show of hands from representatives of the 28-nation European Union. Daesh is an English representation of the Arabic acronym for Islamic State.

The vote in Strasbourg, France, comes eight days after the Council of Europe, a legally nonbinding human-rights consortium, adopted a largely similar resolution.

Religious-freedom advocates have been lobbying Western governments to formally apply the term genocide to Islamic State’s 21-month drive to impose a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam upon northern Iraq and Syria. Under multinational human-rights agreements, formal recognition of genocide heightens the obligation of participating countries to respond.

“Daesh is committing genocide against Christians and Yazidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities, who do not agree with the so-called ISIS/Daesh interpretation of Islam,” the resolution reads.

“This therefore entails action under the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; underlines the fact that those who intentionally, for ethnic or religious reasons, conspire in, plan, incite, commit or attempt to commit, are complicit in or support atrocities should be brought to justice and prosecuted for

violations of international law, notably war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.”

The resolution urges the United Nations Security Council to seek an International Criminal Court investigation of “violations committed in Iraq and Syria by the so-called ‘ISIS/Daesh’ against Christians, Yazidis and religious and ethnic minorities.”

The vote, which carries legal weight among EU members, calls upon all nations to heed the U.N.’s 1948 anti-genocide convention “to wholly fulfill their legal obligations under the convention and such other international agreements.”

ADF International, a religious-freedom legal organization that has European Parliament accreditation, applauded the move.

“It was high time that the EU responded to the undeniable evidence of this genocide, which includes assassinations of church leaders, torture, mass murders, kidnapping, sexual enslavement and systematic rape of Christian and Yazidi girls and women, destruction of churches, monasteries and cemeteries,” Sophia Kuby, the legal group’s director of EU advocacy, said in a prepared statement.

In late December, more than 60 members of the British government sent a letter to U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron urging him to lobby the U.N. to classify IS atrocities as genocide. Also in December, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an advisory body to the U.S. Congress, issued a similar request to the American administration.

Hillary Clinton, former U.S. secretary of state and a Democratic Party candidate for president, said in late December that she’s convinced.

“What is happening is genocide deliberately aimed at destroying lives and wiping out the existence of Christians

and other religious minorities," Clinton was quoted by *Reuters* as saying.