



Resolution 2016 (2014)¹
Provisional version

Threats against humanity posed by the terrorist group known as “IS”: violence against Christians and other religious or ethnic communities

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is deeply shocked by the threats posed by the terrorist group known as “IS” (“Da’ish” in Arabic), which has been wreaking death and destruction throughout Iraq and Syria.
2. It draws attention once again to the situation of Christian and other religious and ethnic communities in the Middle East in general and in Iraq and Syria in particular. Recent developments in the region, in particular the attitude of the “IS”, have made the situation of such communities evolve from alarming to desperate. In some places now under the control of the “IS”, those communities have already disappeared.
3. In this context, the Assembly recalls its Recommendations [1957 \(2011\)](#) on violence against Christians in the Middle East and [1962 \(2011\)](#) on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, as well as its Resolutions [1878 \(2012\)](#) on the situation in Syria; [1902 \(2012\)](#) on the European response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria; [1928 \(2013\)](#) on safeguarding human rights in relation to religion and belief, and protecting religious communities from violence and [1940 \(2013\)](#) on the situation in the Middle East.
4. The Assembly reiterates its strong condemnation of all acts of violence. It firmly believes that the first priority should be to stop the ongoing massacres and that member States of the Council of Europe should do their utmost to contribute to bringing peace to the region.
5. Alarmed by reports of the continued advance by “IS” forces on the Kurdish town of Kobané on the Syrian-Turkish border, the Assembly urges the international community to respond immediately to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and protect the civilian population.
6. All States in the Middle East and in the wider international community must condemn, together and firmly, the violent actions, as well as the religious and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the “IS” and join forces to face the current crisis and prevent similar ones in the future. They should investigate all human rights violations and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice, without impunity.
7. The Assembly is well aware that the “IS” and other similar terrorist groups active in the Middle East do not act in the name of Islam nor do they represent a majority of Muslims. Indeed, a substantial number of victims are Muslims. Therefore, it welcomes the mobilisation of the Muslim community against the actions of “IS”, notably in the “Not In My Name” campaign.
8. The Assembly expresses deep concern that around 3 000 young Europeans are fighting for “IS” in Iraq and Syria and urges the member States of the Council of Europe to increase efforts to identify them, as well as to identify and dismantle recruitment channels, to prosecute those responsible and to exchange information and co-ordinate their response to returning jihadists. In addition, “IS” sources of funds should be identified and, whenever possible, neutralised and sanctioned.

1. *Assembly debate* on 2 October 2014 (34th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13618](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Ms Theodora Bakoyannis). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 2 October 2014 (34th Sitting). See also [Recommendation 2055 \(2014\)](#).

9. The Assembly welcomes wholeheartedly the United Nations Security Council's unanimous adoption, on 24 September 2014, of Resolution 2178 (2014) on "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts", which calls on member States to prevent their citizens from joining "IS" in Iraq and Syria, including by adapting their legislation.
10. The Assembly recognises that current humanitarian missions are woefully insufficient given the unprecedented humanitarian crisis we are now facing. Therefore, it calls on the Council of Europe member States, on observer States, and on States whose parliaments enjoy partnership for democracy status with the Assembly to increase humanitarian aid supplies to existing refugee camps across Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and expand aid programmes further.
11. As a neighbour to Syria and Iraq, Turkey opened its borders to thousands of displaced persons from Iraq and Syria fleeing the violence, including vulnerable minorities such as the Yezidis. The number of Iraqi and Syrians has reached almost 1.5 million in Turkey, of which almost 250 000 have crossed the border in the past two weeks. In addition, Turkey has set up camps for more than 35 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northern Iraq.
12. Inclusivity must be promoted at all levels, both in Iraq and in Syria. The Iraqi Government and the Iraqi security forces have a responsibility to ensure reported incidents of excessive force and discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities under the former government are not repeated.
13. The Assembly calls on member States of the Council of Europe and the international community in general to support the Government of Iraq in its attempts to provide a credible alternative away from the pull of "IS".
14. The Assembly further recommends that the governments of its member States use their bilateral relations with States affected by "IS" to encourage them to maintain the development of human rights and civil liberties.
15. The Assembly calls on the governments of all member States to facilitate the launch of an inclusive and Syrian-led process that will lead to a genuine political transition, on the basis of the Geneva Communiqué, that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for a free and democratic Syria, where every person will be treated equally regardless of their religion, belief or ethnicity.
16. The Assembly urges the international community to:
 - 16.1. encourage the upholding of fair and equitable status for all citizens irrespective of their religious or ethnic origin. Everyone should be equal before the law, with no religious law beyond appeal to civil courts;
 - 16.2. strongly encourage the region's media sources to engage in and uphold standards of "good practice" and therefore refrain from inciting religious or ethnic hatred, while respecting the freedom and independence of the media;
 - 16.3. ensure that the appropriate conditions are met for the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons;
 - 16.4. encourage and assist whenever possible Christian communities and other religious and ethnic communities, in particular the Yezidis and the Kurds, to actively participate in ongoing discussions on the future of both Iraq and Syria;
 - 16.5. come forward with a globally organised and well-funded programme of reconstruction for the affected areas, supervised by the United Nations;
 - 16.6. support the peoples in Iraq and Syria and stand up for their fundamental rights. In this framework, all actions of the international community should be in line with international law and the United Nations Charter.
17. The Assembly further encourages the countries in the Middle East to:
 - 17.1. recognise that democracy alone is not enough and ensure that respect for human rights and pluralism, which are components of their own civilisation, is constitutionally guaranteed;
 - 17.2. condemn unequivocally not only deadly attacks on innocent people, in particular children and women, but also the use of violence in general, as well as all forms of discrimination and intolerance based on religion and beliefs;

- 17.3. collaborate in bringing to justice, without impunity, those responsible for human rights violations;
- 17.4. strengthen regional co-operation among all countries in the Middle East, with a view to creating diversity in understanding and empowering minorities.

18. The Assembly resolves to continue to follow closely, as a priority, the situation in the region, as well as the tragic humanitarian consequences of the current crisis and the issue of foreign terrorist fighters.