

New York Times Acknowledges that Syrian Opposition Is Targeting Christians and Other Minorities

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Why Are Americans Supporting a “Humanitarian” War Where Minorities Are Being Targeted by Terrorists?

Everyone from the Vatican to priests on the ground in Syria have reported that the [Syrian opposition is persecuting Christians](#).

Now even the [New York Times](#) is starting to report the truth:

Syria’s 2.3 million Christians, constituting about 10 percent of the country’s population, have generally known a more privileged existence under the Assad dynasty than even the Shiite Alawi sect to which President Bashar al-Assad belongs.

As the rebellion became suffused with Sunni militants sympathetic to or affiliated with Al Qaeda, Christians recoiled.

A churchgoing Syrian told me that he used to see himself primarily as “Syrian” and that religious identity, in political terms, was an idea that never occurred to him — until an opposition gang attacked his family earlier this year in Homs. “It’s a label they pinned on us,” he said. “If their revolution is for everyone, as they keep insisting it is, why are Christians being targeted? It is because what they are waging is not a struggle for freedom, and it’s certainly not for everyone.”

As Saudi Arabian arms and money bolster the opposition, the 80,000 Christians who’ve been “cleansed” from their homes in Hamidiya and Bustan al-Diwan in Homs Province in March by the Free Syrian Army have gradually given up the prospect of ever returning home.

The rebels’ conduct has prompted at least some Sunnis who had supported the rebels and once-wavering Syrians to pledge renewed loyalty to Assad. Many who once regarded the regime as a kleptocracy now view it as the best guarantor of Syria’s endangered pluralism.

This is the work of the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia,” he added, referring to the ultra conservative Sunni sect.

Repeated attempts by Free Syrian Army fighters to destroy a shrine to Sayyida Zeinab, the granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad revered by Shiites, have not yet caused the area's Sunni minority to flee — many Shiites here have refused to blame their Sunni neighbors for the rebels' crimes.

Over the past week, more than a dozen Syrians — chiefly Alawi and Christian, but also a handful of Sunnis — affirmed to me their determination to pick up arms to defend Assad.

The seeming indifference of the international community to the worsening condition of Syria's religious minorities — and the near total absence of censure of the opposition forces by the Western governments arrayed against Assad — is breeding a bitter anti-Americanism among many secular Syrians who see the United States aligning itself with Saudi Arabia, the fount of Wahhabism, against the Arab world's most resolutely secular state.

Washington is aware of the scale of the problem. As early as June 2011, Robert Stephen Ford, the U.S. ambassador to Syria, briefed his counterparts in Damascus about Al Qaeda's penetration of the opposition forces. By still ploughing ahead with its support for Saudi Arabia's effort to destabilize Syria, Washington, far from assisting Israel or weakening Iran, is helping to fuel a humanitarian crisis that will come back to haunt the United States.

The fact that so many Americans – including [progressive liberals](#) – still support a “humanitarian war” where minorities are being targeted and [Al Qaeda has somehow become our closest ally](#) shows the power of modern propaganda.

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