



March 17, 2025

Via Public Access Portal

U. S. Department of State
Information Access Liaison Office, A/SKS/IAP/IAL
2201 C Street N.W., Suite B266
Washington, D.C. 20520-0000

Freedom of Information Act Request: Attacks on Christians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Syria

Dear FOIA Officer:

America First Legal Foundation is a national, nonprofit organization working to promote the rule of law in the United States, prevent executive overreach, and ensure due process and equal protection for all Americans, all to promote public knowledge and understanding of the law and individual rights guaranteed under the Constitution and laws of the United States. To that end, we file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests on issues of pressing public concern, then we disseminate the information we obtain, making documents broadly available to the public, scholars, and the media. Using our editorial skills to turn raw materials into distinct work, we distribute that work to a national audience through traditional and social media platforms. AFL has over 344,000 followers on X.

I. Background

On February 13, 2025, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a group affiliated with the terrorist organization Islamic State (IS), captured 70 Congolese Christians located in Mayba.¹ The militants subsequently transported their Christian prisoners to a church in a village called Kasanga where the prisoners were all beheaded.² These actions are part of a wider campaign against Christians in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where ADF and IS militants conduct

¹ *70 Christians Found Beheaded in Church in DRC*, OPEN DOORS UK & IRELAND (Feb. 19, 2025), <https://perma.cc/C9S3-N73J>.

² Paul Tilsley, *70 Christians Beheaded in African Country by ISIS-Aligned Militants, Groups Say; World Mostly Silent*, FOX NEWS (Feb. 22, 2025), <https://perma.cc/82RC-DLMA>.

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abductions, killings, and displacement in order to establish an Islamic Caliphate.³ In addition, hundreds of Christians in Syria have come under attack as Islamist forces have reportedly slaughtered more than seven hundred civilians since March 6, 2025.⁴

These atrocities are but the latest in a much larger and long-running campaign of rape, murder, forced conversion, and abduction being waged by Muslim extremists against Christians and other religious minorities in Africa and the Middle East.⁵ The Biden-Harris Administration continued the Obama Administration's practice of ignoring or actively concealing the sectarian Islamic motive for violence. For example, the Biden-Harris Department of State intentionally misattributed jihadist violence in Nigeria to climate change, farmer-herder conflicts, and ethnic divides.⁶ The public and Congress deserve the truth about the perpetrators of this horrific religious persecution and the specific religious motivation for their bestial acts.

II. Records Request

- A. All records mentioning or referring to attacks against African or Middle Eastern Christians (including the Alawites), Yazidis, Kurds, Jews, Druze, or other religious minorities by Islamic supremacist or jihadist groups.

³ *Id.*

⁴ See Benjamin Weinthal, *Tulsi Gabbard's Warning to Senate on Syria Proves Prophetic as Al Qaeda-Linked Regime Slaughters Minorities*, FOX NEWS (Mar. 8, 2025), <https://perma.cc/2ZEK-KV8R>; Morgan Phillips, *Religious Slaughter in Syria Shows Need for US, Europe to 'Keep a Close Eye' on Islamist Regime: Greek FM*, FOX NEWS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://perma.cc/ZVM6-JLWH>.

⁵ See Agence France-Presse, *Swedish Woman Jailed for Keeping Yazidi Slaves in Syria*, AL-MONITOR (Feb. 11, 2025), <https://perma.cc/E7SA-R2Y6>; Steven Stalinsky, *On Christmas, Where Is The Outrage? As Jihadi Persecution of African Christians Continues – From Torching Churches And Terrorizing Villagers to Beheading And Murdering Nuns and Priests – Not A Peep Is Heard From Those Who Should Be Leading Efforts To Protect Them – The Pope, The UN, The NAACP, And African American Activists And Organizations Such as Black Lives Matter And Ta-Nehisi Coates*, MEMRI, (Dec. 24, 2024), <https://perma.cc/J48Y-2KYV>; Bassem Mroue, *Syria's Christians Mark a Decade Since a Horrific IS Attack and Worry About their Future*, AP NEWS (Feb. 21 2025), <https://perma.cc/2X9U-TWQP>; Emily Crane, *Yazidi Girl Fawzia Amin Sido, Taken as ISIS Slave at Age 11 – And Then Held by Hamas for 10 Years – Is Rescued by Israeli Troops in Gaza*, N.Y. POST (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://perma.cc/MR3C-XZ6H>; Steven Stalinsky et. al., *ISIS In Africa (Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Mozambique): Targeting Christians – Killing, Beheading, Murdering Priests And Nuns, Burning Churches, Health Clinics, And Homes – As the World Is Largely Silent – WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT*, MEMRI (June 16, 2023), <https://perma.cc/EWP8-LYVZ>; see also MEMRI-TV, *California Pakistani Islamic Scholar Qazi Fazlullah: The Jews Foster Enmity Towards Muslims Due to Their Lust for Power and Wealth; Jews and Christians Are Allies in Their Enmity to Muslims*, MEMRI (Oct. 25, 2024), <https://perma.cc/ASA5-M7LN>.

⁶ See McKenna Wendt, *A Case for Nigeria's Country of Particular Concern Status*, INT'L CHRISTIAN CONCERN, available at <https://perma.cc/CFU8-FQB3>; Mardean Isaac, *Obama's Genocides*, TABLET MAG. (Aug. 2, 2019), <https://perma.cc/VC2Y-3V77>; Nina Shea, *Obama Policies Discriminate Against Christians While ISIS Commits Genocide*, THE CHRISTIAN POST (Sept. 23, 2025), <https://perma.cc/S2TK-FHTB>.

- B. All records mentioning or referring to the persecution of or attacks against Christians, Yazidis, Kurds, Jews, Druze, or other non-Muslims in any of the following countries or territories: Congo, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Yemen, or Syria.⁷
- C. All records mentioning or referencing Executive Order 14202, “Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias.”⁸

The relevant time frame is August 1, 2024, through the date of this request.

III. Custodians

All political appointees, career SES officials, and career employees at the GS-14 step 4 grade and above (or their equivalent) in:

- A. The Office of the Secretary
- B. The Office of International Religious Freedom
- C. The Office of Global Criminal Justice
- D. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
- E. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research
- F. The Bureau of African Affairs
- G. The Bureau of Counterterrorism
- H. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
- I. The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

IV. Fee Waiver Request

Per 5 U.S.C. § 552(4)(A)(iii), AFL requests a waiver of all search and duplication fees associated with this request. Furthermore, AFL has demonstrated its ability and intention to effectively convey the information broadly to the public. AFL’s status as a representative of the news media has been recognized by the Department of State and by other agencies. AFL has been granted fee waivers by the Departments of Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Justice, Interior, and

⁷ Secretary Marco Rubio (@SecRubio), X (Mar. 9, 2025, 4:29 PM), <https://perma.cc/J333-UALT>.

⁸ 90 Fed. Reg. 9365 (Feb. 6, 2025).

Homeland Security. Finally, as a non-profit organization, AFL has no commercial interest, and the request is made entirely to serve the public interest.

We are, of course, available to provide additional information in writing or offline in support of this request. If AFL's request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact us immediately upon making that determination.

V. Conclusion

If you have any questions about how to construe this request for records or believe further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production of records of interest to AFL, please do not hesitate to contact me at FOIA@aflegal.org. Finally, if AFL's request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact us immediately upon making that determination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Will Scolinos

America First Legal Foundation