



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

---

March 14, 2016

**AN URGENT MATTER PERTAINING TO CHRISTIANS BEING  
MARTYRED IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Dear Pastors,

Today I received the attached letter from Archbishop Kurtz, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He asks that our Catholic People write to the Department of State urging that Christians be included in the formal declaration of genocide which the Department of State is expected to make in the next few days.

You are welcome to include his statement in your parish bulletin or reproduce it for distribution.

I have also attached a brief announcement that should be included in the bulletin and/or read from the pulpit.

The petition is available on line at [www.stopthechristianguenocide.org](http://www.stopthechristianguenocide.org).

Thank you for your attention to this extremely important matter.

+Stephen Blaire

## **Join Me in the Pledge to Stop Christian Genocide**

A Statement from Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville,  
President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Today, the people of God must speak up for our brothers and sisters facing genocide in the Middle East. I urge every Catholic to sign the petition at [www.stopthechristianguenocide.org](http://www.stopthechristianguenocide.org). As a people of faith, we must convince the United States Department of State to include Christians in any formal declaration of genocide.

For months, the Catholic Church has been a voice for Christians and other religious minorities facing the evil of deadly persecution. Now, the State Department is expected to make a decision within days. A resolution, H. Con. Res. 75, is also gaining bipartisan support in Congress. Please, make sure your name is added to the witness. The very future of the ancient Christian presence in the Middle East is at stake.

I am grateful to my brother bishops, the Knights of Columbus and all the faithful who have struggled to keep a focus on suffering Christians in the national debate. Rest assured of my continued prayers and support.

With each passing day, the roll of modern martyrs grows. While we rejoice in their ultimate victory over death through the power of Jesus' love, we must also help our fellow Christians carry the Cross of persecution and, as much as possible, help relieve their suffering. By doing so, the Middle East and the world will be made safer for people of every faith to live in peace.

## **BULLETIN / PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **Support the Petition to Stop Christian Genocide**

The President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, has written to all the Catholic people in our country asking us to support a petition to stop genocide in the Middle East and convince the U.S. Department of State to include Christians in any formal declaration of genocide. This call to action comes just days before the U.S. Department of State is expected to make a decision on the issue. A congressional resolution is gaining support in Congress.

“For months, the Catholic Church has been a voice for Christians and other religious minorities facing the evil of deadly persecution,” Archbishop Kurtz said. “Please, make sure your name is added to the witness. The very future of the ancient Christian presence in the Middle East is at stake.”

The petition is available at: [www.stopthechristiangenocide.org](http://www.stopthechristiangenocide.org).