

Side event at UN to focus on threat to Syria's religious minorities

Professors Joshua Landis and Fabrice Balanche will speak at CSI-organized event at Human Rights Council on July 1

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, June 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As violence against religious minorities in post-Assad Syria mounts, Christian Solidarity International (CSI) will hold a side event at the UN Human Rights Council on July 1 to highlight this growing threat.

The event will be held in Room XXV of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, at 10 am CEST. It will be livestreamed [here](#). The recording of the event will be available to view afterwards.



The de facto national flag of Syria since December 2024

Two well-known experts on Syria, Professor Joshua Landis from the University of Oklahoma (appearing remotely) and Professor Fabrice Balanche from the University of Lyon-2 in France, will present the current situation for religious minorities in Syria, particularly the Alawite Muslim community.

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Joel Veldkamp, CSI

CSI's Director for Public Advocacy, Dr. Joel Veldkamp, will also participate in the panel, and will highlight the case of [Suleiman Khalil](#), the former mayor of the Syrian town of Sadad, who organized the town's defense against ISIS in 2015. Khalil has been held incommunicado and without charge by the new Syrian authorities since February 8.

Syria's decades-old dictatorship was overthrown in December 2024, when the jihadist group HTS (Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham) seized Syria's capital city Damascus, and President Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia. The leader of HTS, Ahmed al-Sharaa (formerly known as Abu Muhammad al-Jolani),

declared himself president of Syria in January.

In March, forces aligned with the new government massacred thousands of Alawite Muslim civilians in Syria's coastal regions. In late April, pro-government forces attacked Druze communities near Damascus. And on Sunday, June 22, a suicide bomber massacred nearly 30 Christians gathered for mass in the Duweila neighborhood of Damascus.

In an oral statement at the Human Rights Council on June 23, CSI [warned](#) that "conditions for genocide now exist in the Syrian Arab Republic."

"The violence we are seeing today against Alawite Muslims, Druzes and Christians in Syria is driven by an ideology of Sunni Muslim supremacy – an ideology shared and fomented by the forces who seized power in Syria last year," commented Dr. Veldkamp.

"It is urgent that the international community – especially the backers of the new regime in Brussels and Washington – recognize the gravity of the situation in Syria, and act now to avert a potential genocide."

Professor Joshua Landis, the director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oklahoma, is one of the foremost Syria experts in the United States. Professor Fabrice Balanche, a geographer at the Université Lyon 2 in France, is renowned for his encyclopedic knowledge of Syrian geography and politics, particularly Syria's Alawite-majority coastal region. He is the author, most recently, of *Les leçons de la crise syrienne* (Odile Jacob, Paris, 2024).

The event will be livestreamed at CSI's YouTube channel.

Christian Solidarity International is an international human rights group campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity.

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