



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted in Turkey

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



Total Population: 84,339,067

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 0.2% – **Evangelical Witness: 0%**

Muslim: 97%

Ancient Assyrian Church in Turkey

Used to House Horses

02/02/2022 Turkey (International Christian Concern) - Ethnic minority Christians living in Turkey often face increased persecution when it comes to historical religious places of worship. In a recently reported incident, the Assyrian/Syriac church of Mor Aday is being utilized by local villagers as a stable.

Mor Aday Church, located in Idil district of Sirnak province, is believed to have been built in 620 AD. The place of worship was left to ruin and neglected by the local authorities. Though some walls are still standing, the lack of protection for the historic church means that it is left to be manipulated to serve those that still remain.

The church is located within Tur Abdin, the historic homeland of Assyrians in Turkey. Few Assyrian Christians remain both here and across the country. The Ottoman genocide of Armenians, as well as Greek and Assyrians, decimated the Christian ethnic minorities.

Scholar Susanne Güsten commented in her report, "There were many pressures that continued to drive Syriacs out of Tur Abdin throughout the 20th century. Among them were the Turkification policies of the Turkish Republic, under which their villages and families were renamed in Turkish, their language was suppressed, their freedom of religion curtailed, and their identity denied. Unlike Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, the Syriacs have never been recognized by the Turkish state as a non-Muslim minority under the Treaty of Lausanne. As a result, they were not granted even the limited minority rights accorded to those groups, such as schools and the right to safeguard their language and culture. The reason for this remains the subject of debate, but it does not change the fact that it constitutes a clear violation of both the letter and the spirit of the treaty by Turkey."

A report put out by the Stockholm Center for Freedom underscored the trends that ICC has observed, namely the increased rights violations, hate speech, and attacks against minorities living in Turkey in 2021. This includes the desecration of historical Christian sites across the country including a Greek orphanage, a Chaldean cave church, and Armenian churches. Treasure hunters and looters help themselves to the unprotected ancient ruins of churches and monasteries.

(VOM) The gospel spread throughout what is now Turkey in the first century, and the region remained under Christian rule for centuries, beginning in the fourth century. Now, however, fewer than 1 percent of Turks are Christians. Turks are proud of their nation, which has seen rapid industrial growth and modernization. Unfortunately, Islam is considered by most Turks to be part of their national identity; it is hard for them to imagine leaving Islam even if they know little about its teachings and do not practice its tenets. Christians in Turkey have limited freedom of worship. While there are few Turkish churches, believers boldly share Christ with their countrymen. Ongoing changes in Turkey's government have limited missionary activity and increased pressure on the small Christian community.

96 percent of Turks are Sunni Muslims who view Islam as a core part of their identity, even though most are not devout. Fewer than 1 percent of Turks are Christians.

Believers face a range of challenges from family members, neighbors, employers and the government.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TURKEY:

Pastors have been targeted in sophisticated assassination plots, and a missionary was murdered in 2019. Another missionary and two Turkish believers were brutally murdered in a highly publicized 2007 incident. Evangelism faces significant opposition in Turkey, and Christian converts from Islam are harassed and pressured from all sides. Believers are opposed by their families, communities and all levels of government. Mature expatriate believers - many of whom have lived in Turkey for decades - have long served in Turkish churches; however, the Turkish government has recently targeted these foreign workers for expulsion.