

Endangered Assyrian Christians 2025 Report

As 2025 draws to a close, Assyrian Christians—indigenous to the Middle East and among Christianity’s earliest believers—continue to face numerous challenges across their ancestral homeland, some of which threaten their very survival.

1. Building Brothels in the Assyrian town of Ankawa (ongoing)

In Iraq, many within the community have expressed concern that developments in Ankawa—once an entirely Assyrian district in Erbil—are undermining its Christian character. Residents report that the relocation of regional government headquarters to Ankawa, combined with the emergence of brothels and similar establishments in residential areas, has caused significant anxiety.

Despite multiple complaints submitted to the authorities, community members say no action has been taken. Many Assyrians view these actions as consistent with a long-running strategy to alter the region’s demographics and displace the native Assyrian community. While church leadership may receive support from the authorities, congregations on the ground continue to face immense pressure as they struggle to maintain their presence and identity.

2. Vandalism of the Assyrian/Christian Cemetery

On December 4, 2025, graves in the Christian cemetery of Armota village in the Koysanjaq District—originally a 4th century Assyrian Christian monastery—were vandalized, destroyed, and dug up. The attack caused major damage to headstones and the site as a whole, generating widespread anger among local residents and the broader Assyrian community.

It should be noted that this was not the first of such attacks on Christian cemeteries in the region, and evidence points to the likelihood of further occurrences. Similar assaults on Assyrian Christian cemeteries have occurred in Shaqlawa, Enishke, and Zakho, reflecting a troubling pattern of targeted vandalism across the **Kurdistan Region of Iraq**.

3. Church Attack

On December 5th, 2025, the church in the town of Deralok, Kurdistan Region, was subjected to vandalism and defacement. This attack is part of a growing record of offenses against Assyrian Christian religious and holy sites across the region.

4. Kurdish Neo-Nazi (HAWPA) and Muslim Brotherhood Influence (ongoing)

The growth and formal registration of extremist Kurdish groups, like the neo-Nazi Hawpa movement and associated ultra-nationalist youth networks, has raised significant concerns among Assyrian Christians. Community members report cyberbullying, threats, and hate

speech in mosques, especially during Christmas time. Hawpa's charter explicitly calls for the genocide of Assyrians, including Chaldeans and Syriac denominations.

Additionally, three Muslim Brotherhood parties are embedded within the KRG and may have influenced the draft constitution's Sharia-based framework.

Incidents such as the April 2025 attack on the Assyrian New Year parade by a Kurdish ISIS member, together with rising online harassment and increasingly hostile rhetoric, have deepened insecurity among Assyrian Christians. These fears are compounded by the absence of meaningful deterrent measures or accountability from the authorities.

5. Elections

Amid ongoing political competition between the PDK, PUK, and the Babylon Movement (led by Rayan al-Kildani), the five quota seats designated for Christians in Iraq's central government have increasingly become a point of contention. Of these seats, three are taken by PDK proxies and two by proxies aligned with Rayan al-Kildani.

Since these seats are not elected exclusively by Assyrian Christian voters, those who ultimately assume these positions often serve the political interests of their backers rather than independent representatives of the Assyrian community. This has effectively eliminated genuine Assyrian Christian representation in both the KRG and Iraqi Central parliaments, leaving space only for candidates who act as proxies of dominant political groups, including those who run as "independent" but operate as PDK-backed figures.

Assyrian candidates from the Nineveh Plains—particularly from Baghdeda—report that their applications were rejected by Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission without clear explanation or through uneven application of electoral procedures. Many argue that these decisions were shaped by political pressure linked to the influence of Rayan al-Kildani.

6. Demographic Changes (ongoing)

As the Nineveh Plains remains a disputed region, Rayan al-Kildani has sought to expand his influence there, in part to counter PDK-backed demographic changes, including through the large-scale resettlement of Shia populations supported by Iran—a process that continues to reshape the area. Additionally, the PDK has established an office in Baghdeda, an entirely Assyrian city, to assert its control over the area.

7. Governorate Status

In 2025, Halabja was recognized as a governorate; however, the proposed Nineveh Plains Governorate outlined in Article 125 of the Iraqi Constitution remains unimplemented.

Nineveh, once the flourishing capital of the ancient Assyrian Empire—and later among the earliest and strongest centers of Christianity—continues to experience a steady and forced decline in its indigenous Assyrian Christian population.