



ISIS IS COMMITTING GENOCIDE

By Gregory Stanton

Members of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, representing the world's largest organization of experts on genocide, have called upon the United States Congress to declare that the crimes committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also known as Daesh, constitute genocide in violation of the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Genocide is the intentional destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such. ISIS is committing genocide against religious groups that do not conform to ISIS's totalitarian definition of 'true Islam.' ISIS's mass murders of Chaldean, Assyrian, Melkite Greek, and Coptic Christians, Yazidis, Shia Muslims, Sunni Kurds and other religious groups meet even the strictest definition of genocide.

ISIS's policy of mass rape is also genocidal. The gendered pattern of persecution pursued by ISIS against groups it considers to be infidels conforms to historical patterns of genocide, particularly the mass killing of men and teenage boys accompanied by the rape and enslavement of women and teenage girls and the kidnapping of children.

ISIS government in areas it has occupied includes beheadings of captives and people considered apostates, destruction of religious centers such as churches and monasteries, and pillage of ancient cultural sites that do not conform to the regime's religious orthodoxy—acts typical of genocidal regimes.

ISIS rules by totalitarian terror. ISIS leaders, many of them from Saddam Hussein's sadistic regime, have read Stalin's writings on how to use terror to rule populations through fear. That is why ISIS beheads its captives, and then posts videos of the beheadings on the internet.

ISIS must be defeated militarily to destroy the illusion of invincibility its terrorism has created. It is incredible that American airstrikes have left Raqqa and dozens of ISIS training camps standing. Are American and NATO Air Forces incompetent?

ISIS must also be defeated ideologically. This is a spiritual war, very similar to the Cold War against Communism. Muslim nations must reclaim Islam from the satanic preaching of ISIS. The imaginary ISIS caliphate is like the Khmer Rouge attempt to recreate the imaginary 11th century Angkor Empire.



What difference would it make to call the crimes of ISIS “genocide?” Studies by genocide scholars have shown that calling genocide by its proper name, rather than using euphemisms like “ethnic cleansing” or weaker terms like “crimes against humanity,” increases the probability of forceful action to end the crimes by over four times.

The most relevant case was Kosovo, where US War Crimes Ambassador Scheffer’s determination that the crimes were genocidal massacres led nearly directly to the bombing of Belgrade and a rapid end of the conflict.

One way to undermine the ideological attraction of ISIS is indictment of ISIS leaders by the International Criminal Court (ICC.) Because Syria and Iraq are not state-parties to the ICC, only the UN Security Council can refer ISIS to the ICC. Russia and China might not block such referral since they have radical Muslims of their own to deal with.

The UN Security Council should refer ISIS to the ICC for investigation and prosecution. The Arab League, Turkey, NATO, and national police forces should act swiftly and firmly to arrest ISIS leaders. ISIS must be stopped and brought to justice.