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# An Investigation into Alleged Practices Against Christian Women During the Syrian Conflict

## I. Introduction

### Purpose and Scope

This report presents an investigation into the specific allegation that Christian women in Syria were subjected to a practice of being systematically "matched" or "paired" with fighters immediately before being executed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or affiliated extremist groups during the Syrian conflict. The scope of this investigation is precisely defined by this central query. It aims to ascertain the veracity of this particular claim by examining available evidence while situating the allegation within the extensively documented context of broader atrocities and severe human rights violations committed against Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities in Syria and Iraq, particularly during the period of ISIS's territorial control.

### Methodology

The investigation draws upon a range of sources, including news reports from established international organizations, detailed reports published by major human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, findings from United Nations bodies including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (UN COI), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), official human rights reports from governmental bodies (e.g., U.S. Department of State, UK Parliament),

academic analyses, and available documented witness testimonies. In accordance with rigorous investigative standards, information derived from these sources has been cross-referenced wherever possible to assess its credibility and consistency, particularly concerning the specific details of the allegation under review.

**Sensitivity and Objectivity**

The subject matter addressed herein involves allegations of extreme violence, persecution, and profound human suffering. This report maintains a formal, objective, and analytical tone throughout. It is committed to presenting verified facts based on the available evidence and explicitly acknowledges the limitations encountered, particularly regarding direct corroboration for the specific sequence of events described in the core allegation. The aim is to provide a factual account devoid of sensationalism while respecting the gravity of the documented abuses.

**Key Initial Finding and Report Structure**

A preliminary assessment of authoritative sources specifically queried about the allegation revealed a consistent lack of direct, corroborating evidence for the precise sequence of Christian women being "matched" or "paired" with fighters *immediately* prior to execution.[1] However, these same sources, alongside a wider body of evidence, unequivocally confirm that Christian women were indeed victims of numerous grave atrocities perpetrated by ISIS and affiliated groups, including summary executions, targeted abductions, various forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) such as rape and forced marriage, extortion, and forced displacement.[1]

The very existence of such a specific query points towards the multifaceted and horrific nature of the violence employed by groups like ISIS. While the exact sequence described may lack verification in available documentation, its perceived plausibility likely stems from the documented reality of ISIS employing both systematic executions and systematic sexual enslavement or forced marriage as distinct, brutal tactics. The investigation must therefore carefully distinguish between these documented practices. The specific nature of the query—focusing on the immediacy of pairing before execution—underscores the critical importance of precision in human rights documentation. Atrocities often involve complex sequences and motivations. Establishing the facts requires distinguishing between documented patterns and unverified claims or potential conflations, which is vital for historical accuracy and future accountability efforts that depend on corroborated evidence of specific criminal acts.

This report is structured to first establish the necessary context regarding ISIS's emergence, its ideology, and the environment of the Syrian conflict. It will then detail the range of documented atrocities committed against Christian women. Subsequently, it will critically examine the available evidence concerning the specific allegation of "matching/pairing immediately before execution." Findings from international bodies and witness accounts will be presented, followed by a concluding summary assessment. A mandatory appendix provides a list of the source URLs consulted.

## II. Recent Atrocities Against Minority Women (March-April 2025)

In March and early April 2025, following the collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024, a significant wave of violence occurred in Syria's coastal region, primarily targeting the Alawite minority community.[41] Reports indicate that militias and armed forces affiliated with the new transitional government carried out summary executions, extrajudicial killings, and massacres in areas like Latakia and Tartous governorates, including the city of Banias.[41]

Women were among the victims of this violence, which human rights groups described as being driven by sectarian and retaliatory motives.[41] The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) documented the deaths of 99 women across Syria in March 2025, including 63 women killed during the security crackdowns in the coastal areas.[45] Amnesty International investigated 32 killings in Banias on March 8-9, finding that 6 women and 2 children were among those deliberately killed, often by being shot at close range.[41] One witness described armed men asking if her family was Alawite before shooting her husband in the head.[41]

The total number of civilians killed during this period is reported to be in the hundreds, possibly over 1,600, with the Alawite community bearing the brunt.[42] Methods included deliberate, targeted killings and summary executions.[41] Further executions of Alawite civilians were reported in early April 2025.[44] Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have called these killings potential war crimes and urged investigations and accountability for the perpetrators, which may include elements of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Syrian National Army (SNA) involved in the new security structure.[41]

## III. Context: ISIS, the Syrian Conflict, and Religious Minorities

### The Syrian Civil War Environment

The Syrian Civil War, which erupted in 2011 following anti-government protests,

created the catastrophic backdrop against which extremist groups like ISIS flourished. The conflict rapidly escalated, involving the Syrian government under Bashar al-Assad, various Syrian opposition factions, Kurdish forces, international actors providing support to different sides, and numerous jihadist groups.[13] This complex and brutal war resulted in immense civilian suffering, widespread destruction, mass displacement, and a breakdown of state authority in large parts of the country, creating a power vacuum exploited by groups with transnational ambitions.[13] Various actors, including the Syrian regime, regime-linked militias, ISIS, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS, formerly Nusra Front), and Turkish-backed Syrian opposition groups, have been implicated in severe human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law throughout the conflict.[14]

**Emergence and Ideology of ISIS**

The Islamic State (IS), also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS or ISIL) or Daesh, emerged from the remnants of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).[19] Founded on a radical Salafi-Jihadist ideology, ISIS aimed to establish a global Caliphate governed by its extreme interpretation of Islamic law.[19] The group experienced rapid growth following its involvement in the Syrian Civil War starting around 2011 and dramatically expanded its territorial control across large swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2013 and 2014, capturing major cities like Mosul and Raqqa.[8] ISIS's ideology is characterized by a totalitarian worldview emphasizing the indivisibility of religion (din), life (dunya), and government (dawla), seeking to impose this order globally through violent and non-violent means.[20] The group became notorious for its extreme brutality, including public beheadings, mass executions, and the systematic use of sexual violence, attracting a significant number of foreign fighters.[19]

**ISIS's Doctrine Towards Religious Minorities**

Central to ISIS's ideology was its harsh classification of those outside its narrow definition of Sunni Islam. Shia Muslims were frequently targeted as "apostates" (murtadd). Non-Muslim minorities, particularly Christians ("People of the Book") and Yazidis ("pagans"), were deemed "infidels" (kuffar) or "polytheists" (mushrikeen).[2] This theological framework explicitly sanctioned extreme violence against these groups. ISIS publicly cited the Yazidis' faith as justification for its genocidal assault in August 2014 and subsequent atrocities, including mass killings and the enslavement of women and girls (sabaya).[2] For Christians, ISIS often presented a stark choice: convert to Islam, pay a punitive "protection" tax known as jizya, flee their homes, or face execution.[5] ISIS propaganda explicitly threatened Christians, vowing to "break your

crosses, and enslave your women".[6]

The application of the jizya by ISIS warrants particular attention. While drawing on historical Islamic concepts, ISIS weaponized it primarily as an instrument of subjugation and extortion rather than a stable, albeit discriminatory, system of governance for non-Muslim minorities. Reports indicate that the demand for jizya was frequently part of a broader ultimatum that included forced conversion or death.[5] In practice, its imposition was often inconsistent and directly linked to violence. For instance, in Nineveh, demands for the tax preceded or accompanied killings, kidnappings, and the dispossession of the Christian population.[6] In Raqqa, Syria, it was reportedly imposed only *after* ISIS had already closed churches, burned Bibles, and kidnapped priests.[6] This pattern suggests the jizya served more as an ideological pretext for immediate control, extortion, and the justification of further violence, often leading to expulsion or death regardless of whether the tax was paid.

### Systematic Targeting of Christians

Upon seizing control of territories with Christian populations in Syria and Iraq (such as Mosul, the Nineveh Plains, and parts of northeastern Syria like the Khabour valley), ISIS systematically implemented its discriminatory and violent policies.[3] Tactics included marking Christian homes with the Arabic letter "N" (for *Nasrani*, or Christian) to identify occupants for persecution, issuing the aforementioned ultimatums, looting and destroying churches and other Christian religious property, and carrying out killings and abductions.[6] These actions resulted in the mass flight of ancient Christian communities from their ancestral homelands, contributing significantly to the drastic decline of the Christian presence in the region.[5] While ISIS received significant attention, it is important to note that other extremist groups also persecuted Christians, and broader factors like general violence and lack of economic opportunity have contributed to the long-term Christian exodus from the Middle East.[5]

## IV. Documented Atrocities Against Christian Women by ISIS

The available evidence confirms that Christian women were subjected to a range of horrific atrocities by ISIS during its period of territorial control in Syria and Iraq. These abuses formed part of a broader campaign of persecution targeting Christians and other minorities deemed enemies by the group.

### Executions and Killings

Multiple sources confirm that ISIS fighters murdered and executed Christians, including women, in areas under their control.[3] Patriarch Ignatius Youssef III Younan of

Antioch estimated that over 500 Christians were murdered in Iraq and over 1000 in Syria, while the Archbishop of Aleppo spoke of hundreds killed or kidnapped in his city alone.[6] Specific examples cited include the 2015 beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya (an ISIS affiliate) [11] and the murder of Father Frans van der Lugt in Homs, Syria.[22] While these accounts confirm executions occurred, none of the reviewed materials describing executions of Christians contain details suggesting a practice of "matching" or "pairing" women with fighters immediately beforehand.[1] This contrasts with documented accounts concerning Yazidis, where men and older boys were systematically separated from women and younger children before being executed.[2]

**Abductions and Forced Disappearances**

ISIS systematically abducted Christians, including large numbers of women and girls.[3] Notable incidents include the abduction of hundreds of Assyrian Christians, many of them women and children, from villages along the Khabour River in Syria's Al-Hasakah governorate in February 2015.[5] Reports indicate that hundreds of Christians were kidnapped in Syria, and over 150 were seized in Iraq's Nineveh Plain after ISIS took control in 2014.[6] Years later, many abducted individuals remain missing. Some reports suggest that dozens of Christian women abducted in 2014-2015 were likely forced into marriages with ISIS fighters, and at least one Assyrian Christian woman was known to be held in the Al-Hol detention camp in northeast Syria following her abduction and successive forced marriages.[3] These abductions by ISIS mirror the broader pattern of enforced disappearances employed systematically by the Syrian regime and other armed groups throughout the conflict as a tool of intimidation and control.[15]

**Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)**

Christian women were explicitly targeted for sexual and gender-based violence by ISIS fighters.

- **Rape and Sexual Assault:** Reports from human rights organizations and witness testimonies confirm that Christian women endured rape and other forms of sexual assault at the hands of ISIS members.[5] Testimonies collected for a report on Christian persecution highlighted widespread rape and the resulting mental trauma, including acute distress and breakdown.[6]
- **Forced Marriage and Sexual Slavery:** Evidence indicates that some Christian women abducted by ISIS were forced into marriage with fighters or subjected to sexual slavery.[3] Witness accounts describe coercion into marriage [24], and the practice of ISIS fighters taking multiple wives, sometimes across different

countries.[26] A 2015 US Congressional hearing noted that ISIS used forced marriage as a calculated strategy to expand its demographic base and eradicate diverse communities.[4] However, the scale and systematic nature of sexual enslavement targeting Christian women appear different from that documented against Yazidi women and girls. ISIS explicitly justified the mass enslavement of Yazidis based on their designation as "pagans," leading to thousands being sold in slave markets (souk sabaya) and subjected to organized rape.[1] While Christian women were also subjected to forced marriage and sexual violence, testimony from the 2015 hearing suggested they were not subjected to the *same kind* of systematic sexual enslavement as Yazidis.[4] Nonetheless, reports suggest dozens of abducted Christian women were likely forced into such marriages.[3]

**Extortion, Displacement, and Destruction**

The imposition of the jizya tax, coupled with pervasive violence and threats, played a key role in the forced displacement of Christian communities from ISIS-controlled territories.[5] Facing ultimatums to convert, pay, leave, or die, hundreds of thousands fled.[12] ISIS also engaged in the widespread looting of Christian property and the deliberate destruction of churches, monasteries, and other religious sites, aiming to erase the Christian heritage from the region.[6]

**Summary of Documented Atrocities Against Christian Women by ISIS**

The following table summarizes the types of atrocities confirmed by multiple sources to have been committed against Christian women by ISIS in Syria and Iraq:

| Type of Atrocity | Location(s) | Timeframe | Key Details/Examples | Documenting Source(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Execution / Murder** | Syria (e.g., Aleppo), Iraq (e.g., Nineveh) | 2013 onwards | Targeted killings, beheadings (though less documented for women than men), estimates of hundreds/thousands killed across the | [3] |

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| | | | region. | |
| **Abduction / Forced Disappearance** | Syria (e.g., Al-Hasakah), Iraq (e.g., Nineveh) | 2014 onwards | Systematic kidnapping of hundreds, including women and children (e.g., Khabour Valley incident); many remain missing; links to forced marriage. | [3] |
| **Rape / Sexual Assault** | Syria, Iraq | 2014 onwards | Widespread sexual violence reported by survivors and human rights groups; severe psychological trauma documented. | [5] |
| **Forced Marriage / Sexual Slavery** | Syria, Iraq | 2014 onwards | Documented cases of Christian women forced into marriage/slavery; used as strategic tool by ISIS; scale appears different from Yazidi enslavement. | [3] |
| **Extortion (via jizya)** | Syria (e.g., Raqqa), Iraq (e.g., Nineveh) | 2014 onwards | Punitive tax imposed as part of ultimatum (convert/pay/leave/die); used as pretext for violence and | [5] |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | dispossession. | |
| **Forced Displacement** | Syria, Iraq (esp. Christian towns/villages) | 2014 onwards | Mass exodus driven by violence, threats, ultimatums, and destruction of communities; drastic population decline. | [5] |
| **Destruction of Religious Sites** | Syria, Iraq | 2014 onwards | Deliberate destruction of churches, monasteries, crosses, and religious symbols to erase Christian presence. | [6] |

## V. Investigating the Specific Allegation: "Matching/Pairing" Immediately Before Execution

### Direct Review of Evidence

A core objective of this investigation was to verify the specific claim that Christian women in Syria were subjected to a practice of being "matched" or "paired" with ISIS fighters (or fighters from affiliated groups) immediately prior to being executed. To this end, targeted searches were conducted within reports and documents from key human rights organizations, UN bodies, government sources, and transcripts of relevant hearings.

The results of this direct review are unambiguous: **None** of the examined reports and sources provided specific information confirming this alleged practice.[1] Reports from Human Rights Watch focusing on ISIS's systematic rape (primarily of Yazidis) [1], the UN Commission of Inquiry's report on the Yazidi genocide [2], a recent USCIRF brief on the Iraq genocide [3], a 2015 US Congressional hearing transcript on ISIS's war on women [4], a UK government-commissioned report on Christian persecution [5], a commentary from the CATO Institute detailing atrocities [6], and Amnesty International's reporting on Syria [7] were all specifically checked for information related to this claim. All indicated

that such information was unavailable within those documents.

**Analysis of Potential Conflation**

The persistence of such specific allegations, despite the lack of direct corroboration in major investigative reports, suggests the possibility of conflation between distinct, yet equally horrific, practices documented as being systematically employed by ISIS. Two key practices are relevant here:

1. **Summary Executions:** ISIS routinely carried out mass and individual executions of those it deemed enemies, including civilians belonging to religious minorities like Christians.[3] These executions were often brutal and public, intended to terrorize populations and enforce compliance.
2. **Forced Marriage and Sexual Slavery:** ISIS systematically abducted, enslaved, sold, gifted, and forcibly married thousands of women and girls.[1] This practice, applied most systematically and on the largest scale against Yazidi women whom ISIS deemed "pagans" and thus permissible to enslave [2], but also affecting some Christian women [3], inherently involved "pairing" or assigning women to fighters as property or spouses.

It is conceivable that accounts of these two separate realities—brutal executions and the forced pairing of women with fighters for sexual exploitation or marriage—could become conflated in second-hand reports or public perception, leading to the specific narrative of pairing occurring *immediately* before execution. The available evidence, however, separates these phenomena. Accounts, particularly regarding the Yazidi genocide, often describe ISIS fighters separating men and older boys for immediate execution, while women and younger children were forcibly transferred elsewhere, frequently into sexual slavery.[2] This documented sequence contradicts the notion of pairing women immediately before their own execution.

**Significance of the Lack of Evidence**

The absence of confirmation regarding the specific "matching/pairing immediately before execution" practice from major international human rights organizations (like HRW and Amnesty International), UN investigative bodies (like the COI and UNITAD), and government reports (like those from the US State Department and UK Parliament) is highly significant. These bodies have invested considerable resources in documenting ISIS atrocities, including specific investigations into sexual and gender-based violence, executions, and the persecution of religious minorities.[1] Their reports often rely on extensive fieldwork, survivor interviews, and forensic analysis. While the absence of evidence in these reports does not constitute absolute proof

that such an incident never occurred in isolated cases, it strongly indicates that this specific practice was not a systematic, widespread, or documented pattern of abuse recognized by major investigative efforts focused on ISIS crimes against Christians or other minorities in Syria and Iraq. The consistency of this finding across diverse, credible sources using different methodologies lends considerable weight to this conclusion.

## VI. Findings from International Bodies and Witness Accounts

A review of findings from international bodies and documented witness accounts provides crucial context regarding the atrocities committed in Syria, the specific crimes of ISIS, and the lack of evidence for the queried practice.

### United Nations

- **Commission of Inquiry on Syria (COI):** The COI has extensively documented violations by all parties in the Syrian conflict. Its reports detail the genocide committed by ISIS against the Yazidis, focusing on killings, sexual slavery, enslavement, torture, and forcible transfer.[2] It has also documented widespread and systematic violations by the Syrian Government, including arbitrary detention, torture (including SGBV), enforced disappearances, deaths in custody, and indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas, potentially amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.[7] Reports also cover abuses by other armed groups like HTS and Turkish-backed SNA factions, including torture and executions in detention.[16] Despite this comprehensive documentation of atrocities, the COI's reports do not contain specific findings related to Christian women being matched/paired immediately before execution.
- **UNITAD:** Established to collect, preserve, and store evidence of ISIS crimes in Iraq that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, UNITAD works to support national prosecution efforts.[8] It has identified numerous potential perpetrators of attacks against Yazidis [8] and concluded that ISIS pursued a genocidal policy against Shia Muslims in Iraq.[3] Its work focuses on establishing accountability for specific, evidence-based crimes.
- **OHCHR:** Has reported on ISIS atrocities, particularly against Yazidis, emphasizing the scale of enslavement and the need for investigation and accountability.[1]
- **UN Statements:** Senior UN officials, including the Secretary-General, have repeatedly condemned the atrocities in Syria, demanding protection for civilians regardless of religion or ethnicity, and citing specific incidents like the execution of Father van der Lugt and reports of executions in Kassab.[22] These statements highlight the brutality against civilians but do not mention the specific practice

queried.

**Human Rights Organizations (HRW, Amnesty)**

- **Human Rights Watch (HRW):** HRW has published extensively on ISIS crimes, including detailed reports on the systematic rape and sexual slavery of Yazidi women and girls based on survivor testimonies.[1] It has also documented the challenges in prosecuting ISIS members, often relying on proving membership rather than specific criminal acts due to wartime chaos.[27] HRW has reported on violations by other actors, including the Syrian-Russian military alliance [18] and killings in Syria's coastal region.[29] No HRW reports were found confirming the specific allegation regarding Christian women.
- **Amnesty International:** Amnesty has documented ISIS atrocities against Yazidis [8], widespread human rights violations in the Syrian conflict including unlawful attacks and arbitrary detentions by various parties [7], and ISIS crimes against humanity in other contexts.[30] Its reporting on Syria does not appear to contain information corroborating the specific query.[7]

**Government Reports and Hearings**

- **U.S. State Department:** Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and Reports on International Religious Freedom consistently document horrific abuses in Syria by the Assad regime (unlawful killings, disappearances, torture, SGBV, life-threatening prison conditions) and by non-state actors including ISIS (killings, kidnappings, SGBV, persecution of religious minorities).[15] The U.S. government formally declared that ISIS committed genocide against Christians, Yazidis, and Shia Muslims.[3]
- **U.S. Congressional Hearing (July 2015):** Testimony during a hearing titled "ISIS's War on Women" detailed the group's strategic use of violence against women, including systematic sexual slavery, rape, and forced marriage, particularly targeting Yazidis.[4] Witnesses described forced marriage as a calculated tactic by ISIS to expand its base and eradicate minority communities.[4] While Christian abductions were mentioned, the testimony differentiated the treatment regarding systematic sexual slavery, suggesting it was less prevalent for Christians compared to Yazidis.[4] The transcript contains no mention of the specific practice of pairing immediately before execution.[4]
- **UK Government/Parliament:** The UK House of Commons passed a motion in 2016 recognizing ISIS actions against Christians, Yazidis, and other minorities as genocide.[8] The UK government maintains a policy that formal genocide determination is a matter for competent courts.[8] A government-commissioned report on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East detailed widespread

violence, including SGBV (rape, forced marriage, trafficking), expulsion, extortion, and targeting of religious leaders in Syria and Iraq by ISIS and other groups.[5] This report did not confirm the specific allegation under investigation.[5]

### Witness and Survivor Accounts

Testimonies gathered by UN bodies, human rights organizations, and journalists paint a harrowing picture of the experiences under ISIS rule. Survivors have described witnessing mass executions [2], enduring brutal rapes and being sold multiple times in slave markets (predominantly Yazidi accounts) [1], being coerced into marriage with fighters [1], suffering torture and inhumane treatment [2], and being forced to convert to Islam.[1] Accounts specifically detailing the experiences of Christians under ISIS describe murder, kidnapping, beatings, rape, extortion through jizya, forced displacement, destruction of homes and churches, and coerced marriages.[6] Crucially, within the reviewed body of documented testimony, no accounts were found describing the specific sequence of Christian women being formally "matched" or "paired" with fighters as an immediate prelude to their execution.

## VII. Conclusion

### Summary of Findings

This investigation sought to verify the specific allegation that Christian women in Syria were systematically subjected to a practice of being "matched" or "paired" with fighters immediately prior to execution by ISIS or affiliated groups. Based on a thorough review of available reports from international news sources, established human rights organizations (including HRW and Amnesty International), United Nations bodies (including the COI and UNITAD), government human rights reports (US State Department, UK Parliament), and documented witness accounts, **no direct corroborating evidence was found to support this specific claim.** Sources explicitly queried on this matter consistently reported such information was unavailable in their extensive documentation of atrocities.[1]

### Confirmation of Documented Atrocities

The absence of evidence for this particular alleged sequence does not, in any way, diminish the severity or reality of the numerous, well-documented atrocities that ISIS *did* commit against Christian women, as well as other religious and ethnic minorities, in Syria and Iraq. The evidence overwhelmingly confirms that Christians, including women, were victims of:

- Summary executions and unlawful killings [3]
- Systematic abductions and forced disappearances [3]
- Torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment [6]
- Rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence [5]
- Forced marriage and sexual slavery (affecting some Christian women, although seemingly on a different scale and with different ideological justification compared to the mass enslavement of Yazidi women) [3]
- Forced conversion to Islam [5]
- Extortion, notably through the imposition of the jizya tax [5]
- Destruction of religious sites and cultural heritage [6]
- Forced displacement from ancestral lands [5]

These acts constitute gross violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.[1] Several international bodies and national governments have recognized ISIS's actions against religious minorities in the region, including Christians, as constituting genocide.[2]

**Concluding Context**

The specific allegation investigated in this report—the matching or pairing of Christian women with fighters immediately before execution—likely arises from a conflation of two distinct but equally brutal realities documented under ISIS rule: the group's widespread practice of summary executions and its systematic use of sexual violence, forced marriage, and sexual slavery as calculated weapons of war, terror, and demographic engineering. While both elements (execution and forced pairing/marriage) occurred, the available evidence from major investigative bodies does not support the specific temporal link and sequence described in the query as a systematic practice targeting Christian women.

The broader context remains one of profound and ongoing suffering for civilians throughout Syria. Multiple actors, including the Syrian regime and various armed groups, continue to perpetrate grave human rights violations with near-total impunity.[7] In this environment, rigorous, evidence-based documentation that accurately distinguishes between verified patterns of abuse and uncorroborated claims is essential. Such precision is crucial not only for historical accuracy but also for informing effective responses and pursuing meaningful justice and accountability for the specific crimes committed against all victims.

## VIII. Appendix: Source URLs

| Snippet ID | URL |
|---|---|
| 26 | (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr_al-Baghdadi) |
| 13 | (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_civil_war) |
| 19 | https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/1 |
| 14 | https://www.counterextremism.com/hezbollah-in-lebanon |
| 33 | (https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2022-10/2022_01_COI_Report_Iraq_Targeting_of_individuals_EN.pdf) |
| 34 | (https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-06/2024_05_COI_Report_Iraq_Country_Focus_EN_0.pdf) |
| 35 | (https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/threat_pdf/Al-Shabaab-03082021.pdf) |
| 36 | https://www.state.gov/report/custom/bacf62d049/ |
| 20 | (https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Symbolic-Power-of-the-Veil.pdf) |
| 15 | https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/syria/ |
| 31 | https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/iraq/ |
| 29 | http://www.hrw.org/ |

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| 7 | https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/syria/report-syria/ |
| 23 | https://sy.usembassy.gov/syria-2020-human-rights-report/ |
| 37 | (https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf) |
| 38 | (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran) |
| 30 | https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Amnesty-We-Will-Destroy-Everything.pdf |
| 8 | https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2022-0027/ |
| 2 | https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2016/06/un-commission-inquiry-syria-isis-committing-genocide-against-yazidis |
| 39 | (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqd3PBswDPk) |
| 16 | https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/un-commission-warns-syrian-war-intensifying-amid-continuing-patterns-war |
| 22 | https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2014-04-07/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-syria |
| 40 | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Muslims |
| 24 | https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/american-woman-who-led-isis-battalion-sentenced-20-years |

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| 4 | (https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg95695/html/CHRG-114hhrg95695.htm) |
| 9 | https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/David%20Phillips%20Final.pdf |
| 1 | https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/14/iraq-isis-escapees-describe-systematic-rape |
| 25 | https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2015/07/31/marriage-to-isis-fighters-a-ghost-that-haunts-women-in-eastern-syria |
| 32 | https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/syria/ |
| 28 | https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/syria |
| 27 | https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/05/flawed-justice/accountability-isis-crimes-iraq |
| 21 | https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-prosecutor-international-criminal-court-fatou-bensouda-alleged-crimes-committed-isis |
| 3 | (https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-09/2024%20Iraq%20Genocide%20Issue%20Brief.pdf) |
| 17 | https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/syria/ |
| 10 | https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/mass-violence-and-genocide-islamic-statedaesh |
| 11 | https://www.avemarialaw.edu/the-persecution-and-genocide-of-christians-in-the-middle-east/ |

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| 5 | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59786a0040f0b65dcb00000a/042-Persecution-of-Christians-in-the-Middle-East.pdf |
| 6 | https://www.cato.org/commentary/genocide-proceeds-against-christians-other-mideast-religious-minorities |
| 12 | https://us.gov.krd/en/issues/isis-genocide-of-yezidis-and-christians/ |
| 18 | https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/syria |
| 45 | https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/M250401E.pdf |
| 41 | https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/04/syria-coastal-massacres-of-alawite-civilians-must-be-investigated-as-war-crimes/ |
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