



Palestinians Crucify the Holy Land

(Published in *FrontPageMagazine*, October 11, 2007)

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Colaboraciones n° 2010

October 26, 2007

Last Saturday, Palestinian Christian Rami Ayyad was abducted and murdered. [His body was found the next day](#). Six months ago, a bomb destroyed Ayyad's Christian bookstore, the Holy Bible Society in Gaza City.

No group claimed responsibility for the murder of Ayyad, but the bombing of his bookstore was consistent with the pattern of bombings carried out by a jihadist group calling itself "The Righteous Swords of Islam."

Ayyad's death comes at a time when the position of Christians in the Palestinian Authority is more precarious than ever. Dr. Justus Weiner of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs [said in July that](#) "for a number of years now, this minority community [of Christians] has been

in dire need of assistance. Palestinian Christians are unable to practice their religion in freedom and in peace. Most in danger are Arab Christians. And most in danger among Arab Christians are those who have converted from Islam. They are often left defenseless against cruelty from Muslim fundamentalists."

This cruelty is often hallowed by the sanction of Islamic law. Sheikh Abu Saqer of the jihadist group Jihadia Salafiya [announced last June](#): "I expect our Christian neighbors to understand the new Hamas rule means real changes. They must be ready for Islamic rule if they want to live in peace in Gaza." This would mean that, in accord with ancient provisions of Islamic Sharia law, Christians could practice their religion, but only if they did so inconspicu-

ously: "Jihadia Salafiya and other Islamic movements will ensure Christian schools and institutions show publicly what they are teaching to be sure they are not carrying out missionary activity. No more alcohol on the streets. All women, including non-Muslims, need to understand they must be covered at all times while in public." [Hamas even intends to reinstitute the jizya](#), the special tax mandated by the Qur'an (9:29) for Jews and Christians, but from which Muslims are exempt from paying.

Christians are accordingly streaming out of Palestinian Authority-controlled areas - including some of the holiest sites in Christendom. Christians comprised 85 percent of the population of Bethlehem in 1948; [by 2006 their numbers had dwindled](#) to twelve percent, and a large mosque has been built on one side of Manger Square, right across from the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Muslim thugs beat a Christian cab driver in Bethlehem, George Rabie, just for displaying a crucifix in his cab. Rabie noted: "Every day, I experience discrimination...Many extremists from the villages are coming into Bethlehem." Sometimes this discrimination turns lethal: several years ago, Muslims shot dead two Christian women for not wearing the Islamic veil. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades took responsibility and explained: "We wanted to clean the Palestinian house of prostitutes." Samir Qumsiyeh, owner of a private Christian television station, [observed last January](#): "The situation is very dangerous. I believe that 15 years from now there will be no

Christians left in Bethlehem. Then you will need a torch to find a Christian here. This is a very sad situation." A Bethlehem hotelier, Joseph Canawati, [said simply](#): "There is no hope for the future of the Christian community. We don't think things are going to get better. For us, it is finished."

Yet while all this has gone on the world has turned a blind eye. The UN has issued no resolutions calling upon the Palestinians to stop mistreating their Christian minority. Human rights organizations have likewise been silent. And in the West, where Islamic advocacy groups and student groups profess to reject and abhor "extremism," the oppression of Palestinian Christians has likewise not registered on the radar screen. The Council on American Islamic Relations has said nothing about it. Neither has the Muslim Public Affairs Council. And on campuses around the country, Leftist and Muslim groups are denouncing organizers of [Islamofascism Awareness Week](#) events, instead of joining with them to stand against the oppression of [Christians](#) (as well as [women](#), [gays](#), and others) in all too many Muslim countries today.

Why is that? If these groups really oppose jihadist activity and Sharia oppression, why won't they stand against them? These groups have been directing their efforts toward discrediting Islamofascism Awareness Week by casting aspersions upon David Horowitz and others. Some have stooped even to [fabricating posters in order to portray the organizers of the Week as](#)

[bigoted and hateful](#). The losers in all this are the Palestinian Christians and other victims of jihadist oppression. The only ones who are speaking up for them are being vilified and smeared by those who claim to be the sentinels of tolerance and justice.

Yet if Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week is ultimately shouted down on campuses all over the country, among the winners will be those who are making life so miserable for Christians in the Palestinian Authority and all over the Islamic world. And no one will be left to speak for them at all.

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