Persecution of Christians Under the Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian Authority (PA) **actively persecutes** Christians in Judea and Samaria (the ‘West Bank’).

Given the Muslim majority within the PA-controlled territories, the PA enacts religious laws that **treat Christians as second-class citizens**.

Note that the international community recognizes the PA as the legitimate leaders of the Palestinian-Arabs. It never speaks out against this persecution.

What is the status of Christians in the Palestinian Authority today?

- The rise in administrative powers of the PA since the 1993 Oslo Accords has caused the Christian population in Judea and Samaria to flee.
  - Christians represented two-thirds of Bethlehem’s population in 1995 (Bethlehem is one of the most important cities in the world for Christians). In 2012 (after 17 years of PA persecution), Christians made up **less than 20 percent** of the city.¹
- **Muslim extremists have firebombed** the First Baptist Church in Bethlehem 14 times, as of 2014.²
- **These extremists also desecrate Christian graves**³ and attack Christians following false accusations of acting as “agents for Israel and the Western world.”⁴
- Meanwhile, Israel recognizes the full rights of all its minorities and protects the holy sites of all religions.

Dhimmi laws – Persecution against Christians:

Some Muslim leaders refer to the non-Muslim minorities in their societies as **Dhimmis**. The term originated from the Pact of Umar, following the conquering of the Christians in the Assyrian region by Umar ibn al-Khattab in the 7th century.⁵ The Pact highlighted everything that non-Muslims could and could not do, including but not limited to:

1. Denying non-Muslims the opportunity to bear arms
2. Forcing non-Muslims to pay a special tax due to their Dhimmi status
3. Denying non-Muslims the right to publicly practice their religion
4. Non-Muslim testimony carries less weight in court

Many Arab and other Islamic countries still enact these laws, opening the doors to persecution and mistreatment of non-Muslims.⁶ In addition to the commonality of these practices in places like Syria, Egypt, and Iran, **the Palestinian Authority has taken part in this form of persecution of Christians**.
1 "Why Did 60 Minutes Deceive Its Viewers?" *Gatestone Institute*, February 15, 2012.
6 Persecution of Christians in the Muslim world: We are what we tolerate