



More Christian Clergy Missing in Syria

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DAMASCUS, SYRIA ([Worthy News](#))— Last week’s disappearance of an Italian Jesuit priest in Syria suggested foul play following the kidnappings of two other clergy in April, according to Morning Star News.

The Rev. Paolo Dall’Oglio was reportedly negotiating with the Al Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq for the release of hostages and peace between its militants and the Kurds. After Dall’Oglio went missing on July 29, Reuters reported that the Al Qaeda affiliate had kidnapped him.

Dall’Oglio’s disappearance comes three months after the kidnappings of the Greek Orthodox and Syriac Orthodox archbishops of Aleppo; Paul Yazigi and Yohanna Ibrahim were both kidnapped after gunmen intercepted their vehicle and killed its driver near Kafr Dael as the clergymen returned from a humanitarian relief mission on April 22. They are both believed to be held by Chechen jihadists.

Kidnappings of Christians in Syria are often for ransom, but as Al Qaeda-linked groups take over more territory with Christian populations, jihadists are now targeting them to either convert to Islam, or face torture and other violence, according to Ahmad Majidiyar, a Middle Eastern Analyst for the American Enterprise Institute.

“In the case of the Italian priest, the Al Qaeda-affiliated groups may also have been upset at his message of inter-faith and inter-ethnic harmony in Syria,” Majidiyar told Morning Star News.

Hundreds of Christians have been kidnapped and thousands more have fled Syria since the civil war began in 2011; many more have crossed into Lebanon and Turkey to obtain asylum in Europe.

However, should Al Qaeda-affiliated groups end up in control of Syria, Christians who remain will not be able to live there and practice their religion freely, said Majidiyar.



“They would be given three choices: convert to Islam, leave the country, or suffer heavy punishments, including death and jizya, or the Islamic tax,” he said.

Unlike other religious and ethnic groups in Syria, Christians do not have armed militias to protect them.

Source: [Worthy Christian News](#)