

Knights to launch new national TV campaign about persecuted Christians

By Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA - To date, the fraternal organization has donated more than \$3 million in humanitarian aid to assist them and will to launch a national TV ad campaign to draw more attention to their plight.

Plans for the ad campaign were announced at a news conference on the opening day of the Knights' 133rd Supreme Convention in Philadelphia.

The theme for the Aug. 4-6 convention was "Endowed by Their Creator with Life and Liberty," paraphrasing the famous words penned by Thomas Jefferson in the same city 239 years ago.

The Knights said the TV ad was to begin airing the weekend of Aug. 8 and 9.

"A terrible microcosm of this phenomenon (of persecution) is occurring in Iraq and Syria, where Christians have been murdered and enslaved in astonishing numbers," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson.

He was joined at the news conference by Melkite Catholic Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart of Aleppo, Syria, and Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda of Erbil, Iraq.

"We have seen people killed, slaughtered, a woman violated, priests and bishops kidnapped," said the Syrian archbishop.

Archbishop Warda told reporters, "During the history, the Americans have been well-known that they are always with the persecuted people wherever they are,"

The Knights began the Christian Refugee Relief Fund in August 2014 with \$1 million

in matching funds that was quickly met and exceeded by its members and the public. The humanitarian assistance provided has included new housing for those who have had to flee their homes, as well as support for medical facilities in areas flooded with Christian and other refugees.

“Christians in the Middle East are facing a dire situation — and even extinction — while the response from the international community has woefully inadequate,” Anderson said in an earlier statement about the relief effort.

“Pope Francis has urged the international community to take action to help Christians in the Middle East,” he said, “as an organization that has long supported victims of religious persecution, the Knights of Columbus is responding by asking our own members, and the public at large, to help us save the lives of people who are being persecuted simply because of their Christian faith.”

Editor’s Note: The Knights of Columbus has a website with a link people can use to donate to the Christian Refugee Relief Fund, www.christiansatrisk.org.

Also see:

The Knights of Columbus: Serving the Church and the community