

Maria Rita Corticelli

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SUMMARY

Independent researcher with 20 years' experience of field work in Iraq and Latin America. author and consultant specializing in religious minorities, interfaith relations, identity and post-conflict recovery. Maria Rita helps organizations understand the local histories, relationships and social dynamics that shape communities affected by conflict, displacement and political change. Her work combines qualitative interviews, archival research and contextual analysis to produce rigorous, accessible insights for policy, programming and publication.

CORE EXPERTISE

- Qualitative Research
- Policy Analysis
- Post-conflict recovery
- Nation building
- Archival research.
- Report writing.
- Developmental editing.
- Research support.
- Minority Rights.
- Religious Minorities.
- Interfaith Relations.
- Iraq / Middle East.
- Post-Conflict Recovery

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2003-present Independent researcher, Consultant and Editor.
- 2016-2018 Director Center for Genocide Studies, International University of Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- 2017 Peace, Costa Rica. Teaching MA course on Kurdish genocide in Iraq.
- 2017 Invited scholar at Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California. Research on interview methodology to apply to genocide survivors in Iraq.
- 2025-2026 Lecturer Global Studies, Anáhuac University, Mexico.

SELECTED PROJECTS

- Publication of the monograph *Religious Minorities in Iraq: Co-existence Faith and Recovery after ISIS*. A blend of history, ethnicity, religions and sects previously largely ignored.
- Publication of *The Kakais of Iraq: History, Beliefs and Culture*. A book exploring the resilience of Kakais religious group amid violence and war in Iraq.
- EGIC Briefs and reports on religious groups in Iraq.
- Gariwo, Italy. Note on Ghawzan Baho, parish priest in Alqosh, Iraq.
- Gariwo, Italy. Note on Lucy Díaz, the woman who takes on drug cartels in Mexico.
- Fieldwork in Kakais' lands with the department of sociology Catholic University Milan, Italy.
- Consultant and writer for BBC World Service *Iraq Religious Minorities: Exodus and Extinction* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes>.
- International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP). This project aimed at conserving, processing and finally disseminating their data so their family can access to the information spread in different institutions or in the hands of private citizens.

- IMPACT-Iraq: interviews with member of the business community to assess the economic impact of ISIS invasion on the Iraqi Kurdish region's economy.

SELECTED CLIENTS AND COLLABORATIONS

- Gariwo, Italy.
- King Faisal Research Centre for Islamic Studies.
- Catholic University Italy.
- European Gulf Information Center.
- Vista Higher Learning.
- Aparicio Publishing.
- MPS Publishing.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books

The Kakais of Iraq: History, Beliefs and Culture, Bloomsbury, 2025.

Religious Minorities in Iraq: Coexistence, Faith and Recovery after ISIS, Bloomsbury, 2022.

Selected articles

Siman, Y., Corticelli, M.R. The Future of Holocaust Memory in M. R. Boaz Cohen, Wolf Gruner, Miriam Offer, and Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, eds., *Holocaust Testimonies: Reassessing Survivors' Voices and their Future in Challenging Times*, 2025.

Survival: The Case of Yazidi Women, in *Routledge Handbook of Religions and Genocide*, Stephen Smith, Susan Brown, eds., 2021.

Hashd al-Shaabi Is Killing the Kakais, Heirs of One of the Most Ancient Religions in Iraq, *EU-Gulf Information Center*, 13 July 2020.

How the Lack of Transitional Justice Jeopardises the Recognition of Kakais in Iraq, *EU-Gulf Information Center*, 30 August 2020.

EDUCATION

PGC Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Stockton University.

MA Information and Library Studies, The Robert Gordon University.

Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin, Latin American Studies.

B.A. Catholic University, Milan, Italy. Modern Foreign Languages.

LANGUAGES

English Near Native, Italian Native, Spanish Native, Portuguese and French Reading Knowledge.