



PRESS RELEASE

Yazda Stands with the Families of 25 Yazidi Victims as Their Remains Are Returned to Sinjar

Sinjar, Iraq: Today, 1 October 2026, the remains of 25 Yazidi victims of ISIL are being transferred to the Yazidi Genocide Memorial in Solagh, Sinjar, where they will be handed over to their families following Yazidi religious rituals.

The victims were killed in 2014, when ISIL launched its genocidal campaign against the Yazidi community in Sinjar. More than twelve years later, their families can finally lay them to rest.

Of the 25 victims, who were children, women and men of different ages, 17 are from Kocho, four from Hardan, two from Tel Banat, one from Wardyia and one from Borek. Each family will bury their loved ones in their respective village, and three days of mourning will follow.

They were identified through DNA matching, using blood samples provided by their relatives. They are men and women of different ages.

This is the ninth group of remains of Yazidi victims to be returned to their families, bringing the total number of identified victims to 321, while around 530 remains are still awaiting identification.

Natia Navrouzov, Executive Director at Yazda, commented:

“Today, 25 families can finally lay their loved ones to rest, more than twelve years after they were taken from them. But every burial is also a painful reminder that the genocide is not something the Yazidi community can simply leave in the past. Each time remains are returned, wounds are reopened, not only for the families burying their loved ones, but for thousands of Yazidis who are still waiting for answers about those who were killed or remain missing.

There can be no real healing while hundreds of remains are still awaiting identification and mass graves remain unopened. Every victim deserves to be identified, every family deserves the truth, and every person taken from their community deserves a dignified burial. This process must be completed, however long it takes. The families have already waited far too long.”

For over a decade, Yazda has played a central role in documenting, supporting and advocating for the exhumation and identification of Yazidi genocide victims, and has stood with the families of the victims at every stage. In the lead-up to today's ceremony, Yazda has worked directly with the families, providing practical and logistical support for the burials and the three days of mourning. Yazda also provided support letters so that families of the victims living abroad could travel to Iraq and attend the ceremony, and Yazda's team is in contact with the families to offer condolences and support.

Today, Yazda's teams are present at the ceremony in Solagh. The Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) is providing medical assistance to the families and community members, in coordination with the representative of the victims' families. Yazda's psychological support team is on site to support the families, and Yazda's Documentation Team is documenting the ceremony.

Yazda presents its solidarity and condolences to all the affected families and reiterates its commitment to the pursuit of truth and justice.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

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About Yazda:

Yazda is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that was established in 2014 in response to the genocide committed by the self-declared Islamic State (ISIS) against the Yazidis and other minorities in Iraq. Yazda manages a portfolio of humanitarian, justice, advocacy, and development-related projects, all of which are community and survivor-centered in terms of design and implementation. Since its inception, Yazda has been working with local and international partners to provide humanitarian, accountability, and advocacy services to vulnerable minority groups in Iraq in their post-genocide recovery. The organization has been operating in Iraq since October 2014 and has main offices in Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and a branch office in Sinjar in Nineveh Province. Yazda is registered as a non-profit organization in the United States, the United Kingdom, Iraq, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Over the past 8 years, Yazda has grown to employ around 80 staff on average, received support from numerous donors, both institutional and individual, and has reached tens of thousands of direct and indirect beneficiaries through its programs and initiatives.