



PRESS RELEASE

Title: Implementing the Yazidi Survivors' Law, A Review by and for Yazidi Survivors: Yazda Launches Report on the Progress, Gaps, and the Path to Survivor-Led Transitional Justice in Iraq.

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Erbil, Iraq – Yazda has released a groundbreaking report titled *“Implementing the Yazidi Survivors Law: A Review by and for Yazidi Survivors”*, marking **the first large-scale assessment of survivors on the Yazidi Survivors' Law (YSL)**, four years after its adoption by the Iraqi Parliament and two years after the beginning of its implementation. **The Yazidi Survivors Law is a groundbreaking legislation providing a wide range of individual, collective, material, and symbolic reparation measures to survivors of ISIL crimes**, including financial compensation, access to education, land, employment opportunities, and psychosocial support. Importantly, it formally recognizes the crimes committed by ISIL against Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, and Christian communities as genocide and crimes against humanity.

Drawing on the assessment of over **600 Yazidi survivors of ISIL captivity** and **34 civil society organizations**, the report presents an assessment of the YSL's impact on survivors' lives, the barriers survivors face in accessing reparations, and their broader demands for truth, justice, and recovery.

“We thought we would be forgotten like so many others, but the Yazidi Survivors Law gave us back our names, our rights, and our dignity. For the first time in years, we feel seen and protected,” said one Yazidi survivor of the Kocho massacre interviewed in the report.

While over **2,400 survivors have received financial reparations** and 250 have been granted residential land, Yazda's research finds that many survivors continue to face a **lengthy, costly, and burdensome application process** which lacks a trauma-informed and survivors-centered approach: 60% of survivors assessed struggled with travel, and 45% with the extensive documentation requirements. Moreover, many survivors remain unaware of their full rights under the law.

Yazda's report also highlights **survivors' priorities in the implementation of the law**. **71% of assessed survivors identified the search for missing relatives** as their top concern, followed by the **exhumation of mass graves** (64%), the improvement of **security in Sinjar** (45%), the **reconstruction of hometowns** (41%), and **access to justice** (39%).

Survivors' set of priorities illustrate that the YSL cannot exist in isolation and its success depends on the implementation of a broader transitional justice framework in Iraq. As survivors have expressed, the full range of their rights - truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence – must be realized through a comprehensive, inclusive, and survivor-informed national process.

The report notably calls on the Government of Iraq, with the support of the international community to:

- Remove burdensome procedural barriers and ensure the application is survivors-centered, trauma-informed and limits the harm on survivors;
- Ensure the full implementation of all YSL provisions, including access to employment, education, and psychosocial support;
- Prioritize the search for missing persons and the exhumation of all remaining mass grave;
- Develop a multi-annual national transitional justice strategy centered on survivor participation and rights.

The report is part of Yazda's Transitional Justice and Rehabilitation Project and reflects over a decade of advocacy and support to survivors of ISIL atrocities.

Read the full report:

https://www.yazda.org/publications/implementing_the_yazidi_survivors_law

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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.