



PRESS RELEASE

Yazidi Genocide: Paris Criminal Court Recognises the Harm Suffered by the Survivors and Awards Damages

Following the conviction of Sabri ESSID for genocide and crimes against humanity, the Paris Criminal Court has issued an important ruling on the civil claims, formally recognising the harm suffered by the civil parties and awarding them damages. This financial reparation will unfortunately remain very symbolic.

Paris, 22 September 2026. Six months after the historic conviction of French ISIS fighter Sabri ESSID (alias Abou Dojanah al-Faransi), the Paris Criminal Court has issued its decision on the civil claims, providing judicial recognition of the lifelong and multifaceted harm suffered by the survivors of the Yazidi genocide.

On 20 March 2026, Sabri ESSID was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for genocide, crimes against humanity and complicity in these crimes, committed in Syria between August 2014 and throughout 2016 against Yazidi women and children. This marked the first conviction of a French national for genocide, as well as the first time that a French court addressed the atrocities committed by ISIS against the Yazidi community.

In its decision on the civil claims, the Court formally recognised the extent of the harm inflicted by Sabri ESSID on the three Yazidi women and their eight children, including the damage arising from the fear of impending death (*prejudice d'angoisse de mort imminente*), the loss of affection (*prejudice d'affection*) and the moral damage (*préjudice moral*), and granted them financial awards.

The Court also acknowledged the moral damage suffered by the Yazidi associations that joined the proceedings as civil parties – Kinyat, the Free Yazidi Foundation (FYF) and Yazda – as well as by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Ligue des droits de l'Homme/droits humains (LDH) and awarded them one symbolic euro.

In practice, these financial awards will unfortunately remain largely symbolic. As Sabri ESSID has never been located, the victims cannot claim compensation from him. Additionally, under the current French legal framework, foreign victims of international crimes committed abroad are not eligible for compensation from the Commission d'indemnisation des victimes d'infractions (CIVI).

“There can be no meaningful justice without effective reparation. Although this is an important decision, it will remain symbolic as French law does not allow foreign victims to have equal

access to compensation mechanisms and to effectively benefit from reparations awarded by the courts, in cases where the accused is not present or solvent”, declared the five civil party associations.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

info@yazda.org

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.