Yazda marks the third anniversary of the passing of the Yazidi Survivors Law

Three years ago today, Iraq took a substantial step towards acknowledging the sufferings and the rights of ISIL survivors from the Yazidi, Christian, Shabakh and Turkmen communities by enacting the Yazidi Survivors Law. The law is a reparations scheme which provides beneficiaries with a monthly salary, plots of land, rehabilitation services, medical support as well as education, and economic opportunities. The passing of the law including its name, which has been chosen because of the tireless advocacy of Yazidi Female Survivors, has a significant symbolic importance for the Yazidi community.

A member of the Yazidi Survivors' Network (YSN) commented: "Yazidi survivors, especially females, have been advocating for their own rights and the rights of survivors from other communities. We have been a voice for all those who didn't have a voice. We now expect from Iraq and members of other communities not to jeopardise rights we secured for ourselves while expanding the law to fill remaining gaps. We agree that the law should apply to ISIL survivors regardless of their religion, but the name should remain because we worked hard for this and it's a symbolic recognition from Iraq that the Yazidi community was the most targeted."

Since the adoption of the law, Yazda along with the YSN and other partners have been advocating for the full implementation of all its articles. Since 2021, Yazda has been raising awareness about the law, guiding, and supporting survivors with their applications in addition to providing them with certificates to ease the process for them. Additionally, Yazda along with IOM, Jiyan Foundation, Farida Global, FYF, SEED, and DAK also signed an agreement with the Directorate for Survivors Affairs in charge of the implementation of the law to provide mental health support and other rehabilitation services to eligible survivors through a referral system.

Despite this progress, Yazda calls upon the Iraqi and KRI governments to join forces to accelerate the implementation of the law in a survivor-centered manner and to closely collaborate with Iraqi civil society and affected communities. The law is groundbreaking and, if implemented fully, will place Iraq at the forefront internationally in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.