

PRESS RELEASE

In Their Own Voices: Survivors Officially Launch the Survivors Rise Network in Iraq

Date: 21 October 2026

Today, Yazda convened a survivor-led conference to officially launch the Survivors Rise Network (SRN). More than 130 participants attended, including survivors, government officials, diplomats, UN representatives, civil society actors, and partner organizations.

The network's establishment was first announced in [September](#). This first in-person launch put its members at the forefront, giving survivors from the different communities targeted by ISIL a platform to set out their vision for collective action. The conference's message was clear: survivors are more than beneficiaries. They are leaders, advocates, and experts in the pursuit of justice, the rebuilding of their communities and the preservation of collective memory.

Building on more than a decade of Yazda's survivor-centered work and the Know Your Rights (KYR) Programme launched in 2024, the SRN was co-created with KYR graduates and survivor advocates. Grounded in lived experience, it reflects the values and priorities its members defined themselves. The network aims to strengthen survivors' collective action, foster mutual support, and promote the meaningful participation of ISIL survivors in decision-making in Iraq and internationally.

During the event, members presented the network's vision, values and priorities. The afternoon featured two member-led panels: "Shaping the Survivors Rise Network: Vision, Mission and Values," on the network's purpose and guiding principles, and "Dignity First: How Survivors Want to Be Engaged," which set out members' expectations for ethical engagement by media, institutions, researchers and partners. The conference closed with remarks from SRN representatives. In line with the do-no-harm principle, dedicated wellbeing support was available throughout the day.

"Today we are not announcing ourselves on a screen. We stand before decision-makers whose actions affect our lives, speaking in our own voices and expressing our experiences and needs for ourselves. This is the essence of the Survivors Rise Network: ensuring that survivors are at the heart of decisions that affect their lives and lead the way in shaping their own futures," said members of the Survivors Rise Network.

Natia Navrouzov, Executive Director of Yazda, commented: "For years, survivors have been asked to tell their stories to investigators, journalists and institutions, often with no say in what happened next. The Survivors Rise Network changes that. Its members have defined its priorities themselves,



and today they set the terms on which they expect to be engaged. Our role at Yazda is to stand behind them, not to speak for them. We call on governments, the United Nations and all our partners to treat survivors as partners in shaping justice, reparations and the future of their communities.”

Yazda will continue to support the SRN’s work, ensuring that survivors’ priorities and leadership remain central to efforts for justice, recovery and remembrance.

The Survivors Rise Network is supported by the SPACE Programme, funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Yazda and SRN members are grateful for this partnership and for GIZ’s continued commitment to survivor-led initiatives in Iraq.

About the Survivors Rise Network (SRN):

The Survivors Rise Network (SRN) is an inclusive, survivor-led platform that brings together trained survivor advocates from different communities to strengthen collective advocacy, promote collaboration and meaningful survivor participation, and engage with institutions and partners to advance the rights of survivors of ISIL atrocities.

By working collectively, the Network seeks to strengthen survivor leadership and contribute to more inclusive and survivor-centred policies and decision-making processes. Guided by the principles of survivor leadership, inclusion, dignity, respect, a survivor-centred approach, and Do No Harm, the Network advocates for truth, justice, reparations, accountability, and guarantees of non-repetition.

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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 (ISIL) 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. Since its creation, Yazda has 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.

