Yazda Announces new Executive Director

26 February 2024

Yazda is pleased to announce the appointment of Natia Navrouzov as its new Executive Director. Natia's selection underscores Yazda's enduring commitment to the communities affected by ISIS atrocities, placing them at the core of our mission. Her appointment also reaffirms Yazda's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment, as Natia will bolster our gender-responsive planning and engagement efforts.

Natia Navrouzov brings a wealth of experience as a French-qualified lawyer specializing in international law, human rights, and transitional justice. As a member of the Yazidi community, Natia has been instrumental in Yazda's initiatives since joining in 2018. She holds various positions within the organization, including Project Manager and Interim Country Director. In 2021, she was appointed as Yazda's first Legal Advocacy Director. Under her leadership, Yazda collected testimonies of ISIS survivors and documented evidence from crime sites, and collaborated with international and national bodies, including the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability Against Da'esh Crimes (UNITAD), national war crimes units and the Office of Amal Clooney. Notably, her leadership played a key role in the conviction of several ISIS members in Germany, including for genocide against Yazidi victims. In 2019, Natia supported a group of Yazidi female advocates to establish the Yazidi Survivors Network (YSN) and campaigned with them for the passing of the Yazidi Survivors Law until its adoption in March 2021.

Before joining Yazda, Natia worked for a globally recognized law firm specializing in International Public Law and International Arbitration in Paris, as a Research Assistant at the London Court of Arbitration, and Assistant Lecturer at the Université of Panthéon-Sorbonne in Paris. Admitted to the Paris Bar, Natia holds a dual bachelor's degree in German and French Law from the University of Cologne (Germany) and Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (France); she holds Master's degrees in International Law from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and Columbia University (USA), where she graduated as a Human Rights Fellow and Fulbright scholar, and was awarded the Davis Polk Fellowship. Natia is also an Obama Foundation Leader.

Natia commented: "It is an honor for me to have been appointed as Yazda's first female Executive Director. To me, Yazda is not just an organization but a beacon of hope for Yazidis and other minorities, who have endured countless persecutions over generations. With the help of my team and our various supporters, I am ready to take Yazda to the next level and strengthen our collaboration with Iraqi and international stakeholders, and, of course, with affected communities, especially survivors, who will remain at the center of our focus."

We also regretfully announce the departure of Haider Elias from Yazda. Haider was one of Yazda's founders and served as its President for more than nine years. He will work with us to ensure a smooth transition until 31 March 2024, when he will move on to new challenges and opportunities. Yazda expresses profound thanks to Haider and wishes him all the best in his future endeavors.

With Natia leading the way, we are eager to embark on this new chapter and elevate our partnerships to unprecedented heights, leaving a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,
Yazda Board of Directors

For any inquiries, please contact info@yazda.org