

2020 Annual Report

On the frontlines against genocide



Our Mission

Prevent and Assist

Yazda aims to **prevent future genocides** against the Yazidi community and other minorities, and to **assist their recovery** from the 2014 genocide.

Our humanitarian mission

Our humanitarian mission aims to provide a response to the needs of vulnerable groups in North Iraq. Yazda operates in the sectors of emergency livelihood, protection (MH, PSS and case management) health care, education, community outreach, direct assistance (through food and other aid distribution), agriculture, livelihood, training, infrastructure renovation and legal support. Our beneficiaries are the most vulnerable individuals from the Yazidi community and other minorities.

Our advocacy and accountability mission

Our **advocacy mission** raises international awareness about human rights violations against the Yazidis and other vulnerable groups in Iraq and Syria in the context of the genocide perpetrated by ISIS.

Yazda seeks international recognition of this genocide, particularly by foreign governments and parliamentarians, the United Nations, and other relevant international organisations. Yazda supports several genocide survivors in their mission to speak up on behalf of all victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Yazda advocates for better services for survivors, including reparations, and for the rebuilding of their destroyed homeland by ISIS in Sinjar and Nineveh Plain.

Our **accountability mission** provides survivors with a sense of justice for the harms endured through comprehensive documentation of the genocide. Yazda collects the testimonies of survivors and other evidence of crimes and coordinates with other actors to promote accountability and conviction of perpetrators. Accountability is essential for the prevention of future crimes against the Yazidis and other minority groups.





From the President

Dear Yazda supporters, In the past six years Yazda has served as a galactic center for guiding humanitarian projects with regards to the Yazidis in both Sinjar and the Internally Displaced Camps. In addition to that, Yazda has served Christians and other minorities in Iraq to the best of its capacity as a humanitarian and advocacy institution. Our projects have made a macro impact on the lives of the many thousands of families who otherwise would struggle to find daily essential needs. Our team in Iraq and abroad has worked tirelessly to meet the deliverables and ensure meeting targets with 100% as an internal policy guideline specific to Yazda which accepts no less than excellent. Despite the daily obstacles we face as an organization, our team has been a pioneer in humanitarian and advocacy work, such as Medical clinic serving more than 11 villages in Sinjar, Case management serving 1500 beneficiaries, psychotherapy serving more than 80 families with severe cases, documenting mass graves, taking testimonies from the survivors, coordinating with the U.N. Investigation Team for crimes committed by ISIS, supporting local economy and entrepreneurship with 180 small and intermediate businesses, and supplemental education for 1-12 grades. Most of these services are provided to those families who have returned to their hometowns. Yazda team is working relentlessly with partners, donors, supporters and stakeholders in general with a multi-faceted strategy that keeps Yazda essential in the humanitarian and advocacy arena. Although every effort is made by hundreds of NGOs in the region; the need for healthcare, basic education, water and food supply, and the rebuilding of infrastructure of the villages is greater than the humanitarian sect can bear. Therefore, we call for the Iraq and KRI governments and the international community to not let down minorities like Yazidis who have been through a recent-continuous genocide, because today over 220,000 Yazidis have not yet returned to their ancestral homeland and our mission is not accomplished yet.

Haider Elias
Yazda President

About Yazda

Yazda is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 2014 in response to the genocide committed by the self-declared Islamic State (“IS”) against the Yazidi in Iraq.

Since its inception, Yazda has worked with local and international partners to provide Yazidis and other vulnerable ethno-religious minority groups with humanitarian, accountability, and advocacy services in their post-genocide recovery. Yazda has been working in Iraq since October 2014 and operates out of the main offices in Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and out of the Sinuni office in Sinjar in Nineveh Province. Yazda is registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States and as a non-profit organisation in Iraq, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, and Australia.

In the course of 6 years, Yazda grew to employ approximately 120 staff, received support from tens of donors, both institutional and individuals and reached thousands of direct and indirect beneficiaries.



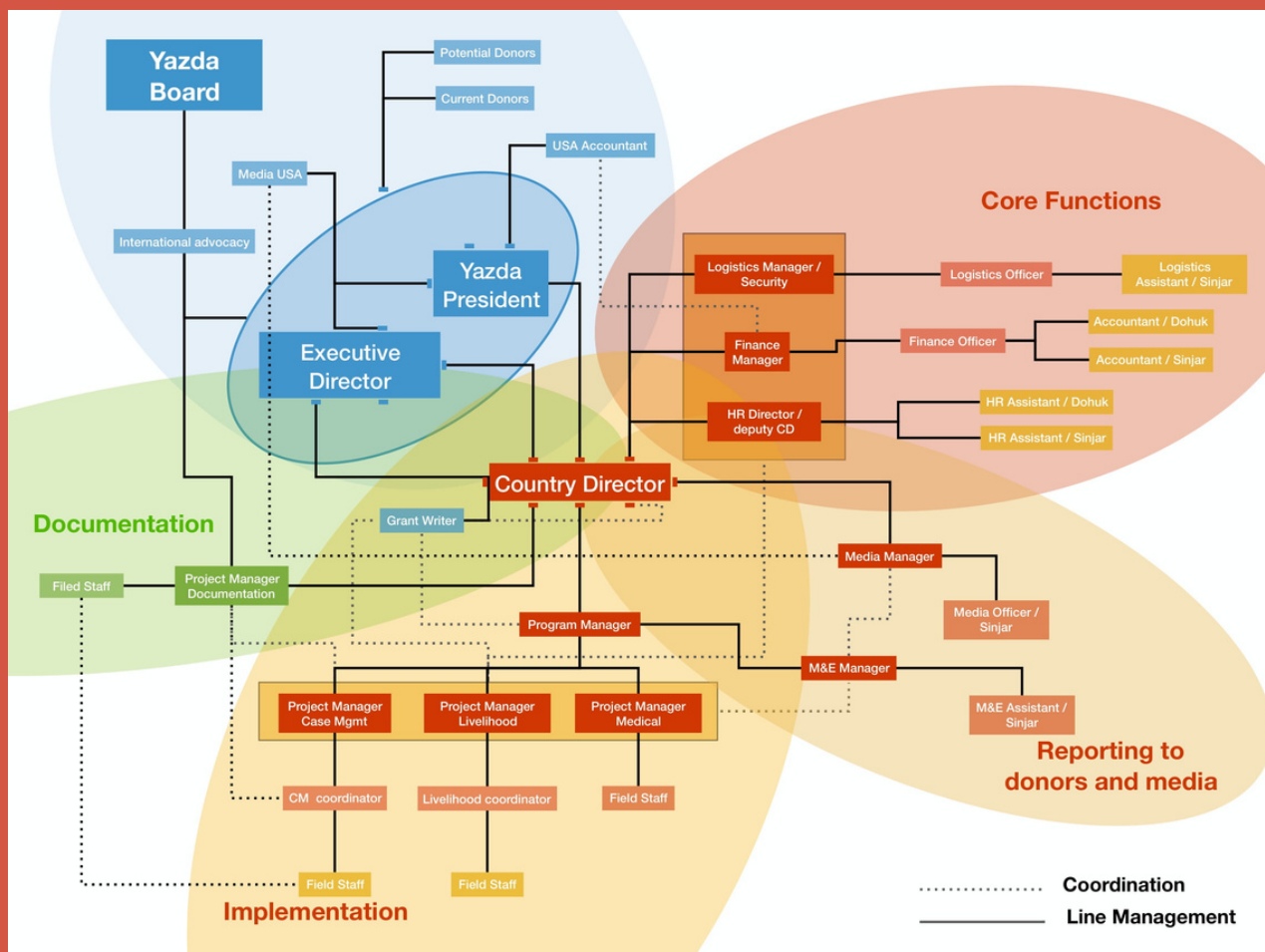
Structure

Yazda has a Global Board who oversees all of Yazda's activities, designs Yazda's strategy, and holds responsibility for all of Yazda's work. The local volunteer boards in the US, UK, Germany, Sweden, Australia and Iraq are responsible for running Yazda's local branches, managing Yazda's Global Volunteer Network and for delivering Yazda's strategy in those countries in compliance with applicable laws.

In Iraq, Yazda is led by the Country Director who manages and oversees Yazda's staff and projects in Iraq. The Country Director manages the core staff (Finance Manager, M&E Director, HR Director, Procurement and Logistics Director, Security Officer, Project Managers and field staff), liaises with partners and donors, and represents Yazda before the local authorities.

In 2020 our team in Iraq includes 120 full-time, paid staff who provide essential services to survivors of ISIS atrocities, IDPs, refugees, and families with low incomes.

Our volunteers worldwide work on advocacy, awareness raising, and building relations with governments and local and international organizations to promote the Yazidi cause. Through international volunteer networking Yazda is able to fundraise for humanitarian projects implemented in Iraq.



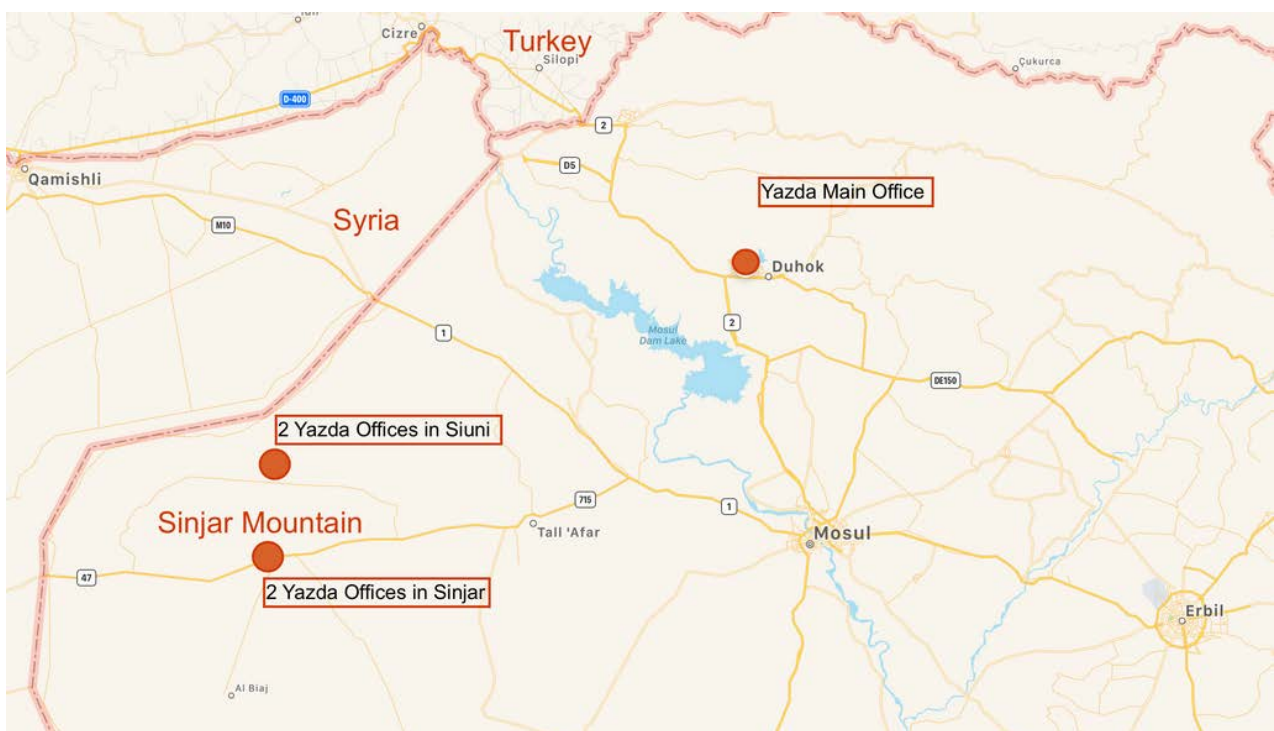
Global presence

In the USA Yazda runs a cultural center in Nebraska. Yazda doesn't have physical offices in the UK, Germany, Australia or Sweden in order to minimize administration costs.



Local presence

In Iraq, Yazda operates from 8 offices and centers. In Duhok we run the main office, Yazda House for PSS activities and our base for case management, psychosocial and livelihood work, and 2 documentation offices where survivors are interviewed within our legal and advocacy activities. In Sinjar and in Sinuni we run a total of 4 field offices and one staff guesthouse.



The Yazidi genocide

3 August 2014

In the early hours of 3 August 2014, the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) launched a coordinated attack across the Sinjar region of Northern Iraq, which is the homeland of the Yazidi ethno-religious minority. The attack came from Mosul and Tal Afar in Iraq, and from Al-Shaddadi and the Tel Hamis region in Syria, besieging the population from all four sides. The Security forces mandated to protect the area abandoned bases and checkpoints leaving the local population unprotected and largely defenceless in the face of ISIS's advance.

In the hours and days that followed, approximately 12,000 Yazidis were killed and over 7,500 mainly women and young children or abducted by ISIS. The perpetrators systematically divided Yazidis into different groups:



- Young women and girls. Some captives were as young as 9 years of age and were forcibly converted and transferred to and between various holding sites in Iraq and Syria to be used as sex slaves or forced to become wives of ISIS fighters. This practice was officially endorsed and regulated by ISIS leadership;
- Yazidi impressionable boys who had not yet reached puberty were separated from their mothers, brain-washed, radicalized, and trained as child soldiers;
- Older boys and men as well as some elderly women who refused to convert to Islam or, in some cases, even those who agreed to convert under pressure were summarily executed. These victims were either shot or stabbed, and their bodies were disposed of on the side of the road or dumped in mass graves. Those who were forced to convert to Islam and spared were then relocated by ISIS to abandoned villages where they continued to be exploited as forced laborers.

ISIS's attack also caused the displacement of 100% of the population, an estimated 550,000 people. Approximately 250,000 Yazidis who fled to Mount Sinjar were surrounded by ISIS for days, in temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius. To further their genocide campaign, ISIS prevented any access to food, water, or medical care in order to ensure the deaths of hundreds of Yazidis before a coordinated rescue could reach them. Subsequently, a collaborative operation was launched including Yazidi volunteer defenders, Syrian Kurdish forces, and the international coalition. Their coordinated efforts provided a safe passage from Mount Sinjar to Syria through which many Yazidis were able to flee from the 7th to 13th of August, 2014, and reach the IDP camps around the city of Dohuk.

Having seized the Yazidi homeland, ISIS went on to devastate infrastructures and religious sites. Yazidi homes, farms and property were destroyed or looted, severely hampering the prospects of surviving Yazidis returning to their homeland swiftly after liberation.



UN Commission of Enquiry

The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic ('Inquiry on Syria') found that ISIS's actions against the Yazidi amounted to multiple war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Yazda and many other organizations are gathering compelling evidence that there was indeed a genocide against the Yazidis, and that this genocide is ongoing as long as captives are not freed, life is not rebuilt and Yazidi as a community don't recover emotionally, socially and economically. This annual report from Yazda outlines some of our efforts to document and address the impacts of this devastating attack against our peaceful Yazidi brothers and sisters.



The Elements of Genocide

According to international law, the crime of genocide has some identifiable elements:

1. **Protected group:** Genocide must be committed against a “national, ethnical, racial or religious group”. The Yazidis, as an ethno-religious minority, clearly fall within this category.
2. **Physical element:** Genocide may be committed by (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to them; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and/or (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria found that ISIS perpetrated all five of genocidal acts set out above against the Yazidis.
3. **Mental element:** The crime of genocide requires that the perpetrator have a special intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group. The genocidal acts must be committed against a person because of their membership in that group and as an incremental step in the overall objective of destroying the group. ISIS has openly stated that its aim to destroy the Yazidi minority, including in articles published in English.

Why The Recognition of the Genocide matters

Since August 2014, ISIS members of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have perpetrated brutal crimes against the Yazidi community of Sinjar, including mass executions, sexual enslavement, forced displacement and the recruitment of child soldiers. Today, an estimated 85% of the Yazidi population of Iraq is displaced and over 3,000 women and children remain in ISIS captivity.

The United Nations and the European Union, as well as many other countries have recognized that the crimes committed by ISIS against the Yazidis constitute genocide. Yazda has worked tirelessly to ensure this recognition, which has several consequences.

- **First**, it acknowledges the gravity of the offence perpetrated against the Yazidis. Genocide is considered 'the crime of crimes', the worst that can be done by a human being to others.
- **Second**, States are under an international legal obligation to prevent and punish acts of genocide



The international community failed to prevent the genocide started against the Yazidis in 2014, it now has a duty to punish those responsible for it.

Recognition of the Yazidi genocide should therefore be a step towards holding ISIS accountable for their heinous crimes in a suitable judicial forum.

Yazda has played a major role since 2014 in pushing the international community to recognise ISIS's genocide against Yazidis and to acknowledge ISIS's crimes against all Iraqi and Syrian communities, especially the minority communities.

The following countries have recognised the genocide

in 2014

- Kurdistan Regional Government - Foreign Minister Falah Mustafa
- Iraq Government

in 2016

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:
- European Parliament
- US House of Representatives
- US Secretary of State John Kerry
- UK House of Commons
- United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.
- Canadian House of Commons
- French Senate
- French National Assembly
- Armenian Parliament

in 2017

- Scottish Parliament

in 2018

- Australian Parliament

in 2019

- Portuguese Parliament



Situation in 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic deeply affected specifically the 300,000 Yazidis still in IDP camps. In March 2020, KRI authorities imposed a total lockdown in the region, with specific restrictions in camps: for weeks, entire families were confined to their tents, while only heads of households were allowed outside the tent. Camps were isolated to prevent the spread of the virus, and this resulted in hundreds of families losing access to out of camp markets and other services. More dramatically, hundreds of IDPs working out of camps, lost their employment and all source of income. The lockdown, combined with the mental and psychological stress of uncertainty and poverty, resulted in a spike of mental health issues, including suicides and suicidal thoughts, an increase of domestic violence and an overall deterioration of wellbeing amongst the already traumatised community.

As the lockdown was lifted in June, hundreds of families decided to relocate to Sinjar, despite the living conditions and level of services remaining very poor. The sudden return of so many put under strain the humanitarian sector, already engaged in responding to the pandemic, and resources resulted insufficient to tackle the needs of many returnees. By the end of 2020, approximately 250,000 Yazidis still live in or next to IDP camps in the Dohuk province of Kurdistan, while many have resettled in second displacement in Sinjar.

The pandemic also resulted in international actors refocusing their strategies towards prevention and response to the health emergency, leaving other sectors underfunded.

In October 2020, the Iraqi Central Government and KRI signed a security agreement to ensure Sinjar's protection and its implementation is gradually ongoing.

In 2020, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) had a tremendous effect on life throughout the world, imposing a complete change in the psychosocial environment of impacted regions, including Iraq, through isolation, contact restrictions, and economic closure. These policies posed a severe threat to the mental health of children and adolescents and continue to do so to this day. The effect of this disease was even greater on IDPs, returnees and vulnerable people.



During 2020, Turkish Air Forces intensified airstrikes on the PKK and affiliated groups in Dohuk and in Sinjar, causing some civilian deaths and spreading fear and uncertainty. While the Iraqi Central Government is pushing for the closure of IDP camps throughout its territory, causing hundreds of families to be once more in second displacement in temporary accommodations, KRI is taking a slower approach where camps remain open until IDPs gradually return to their homes.

In this highly challenging context, Yazda operated at full capacity, and remained open and active during the whole of the pandemic. Services such as PSS and group activities were shifted online and interned credit was distributed to ensure participation of the beneficiaries to our online activities.

In Sinjar, our livelihood teams included new returnees in the ongoing support programs, including them in trainings and apprenticeship opportunities and providing small grant to help resettlement



Humanitarian Work

Our humanitarian mission addresses the needs of vulnerable groups in North Iraq, with a focus on the Yazidi community and other minorities.

Our humanitarian accomplishments in Iraq in 2020 include activities in several sectors including protection health, livelihood and education. Through major projects in MH-PSS and case management targeting women survivors of ISIS and other highly vulnerable and traumatized beneficiaries, Yazda case managers reached hundreds of women and children. In livelihood, through support to small business, income generating activities and vocational trainings, tens of families were able to access income, improve their living conditions and gained the dignity that comes from being lifted from poverty and dependency. The Mobile Medical Unit on its 5th year of operations continued to service remote communities in Sinjar while activities in education, and legal support continued.



Protection



Livelihood



Agriculture



Education



Legal support



Health

Return and Reintegration of IDPs in Ninewa

In our 3rd year, Yazda's projects in support to the return to Sinjar of the Yazidi community continued: the holistic approach that puts survivors complex needs at the centre of the response, includes MH-PSS, livelihood and legal support components. The sustainable and effective return and reintegration of returnees in the Sinjar region and in Bashiqa is now under way, as the Covid -19 pandemic shaped both the challenges and the response of the community and of our NGO.

Our beneficiaries are victims and survivors of severe human rights violations during the genocidal campaign of ISIS.

In Sinjar, 8 MH-PSS staff, 2 lawyers and 6 livelihood and logistics staff operate out of our 3 offices in Sinjar providing beneficiaries with a range of services in the field of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MH-PSS), case management, livelihood assistance, income-generating opportunities, access to public services, social cohesion programs, diaspora engagement, and administrative support.



The main focus is on the large collective villages on the north side of the mountain and in Sinjar City itself.

The 24 month and 30 month long projects started in 2018 and are part of a long term strategy to support the recovery of Sinjar. Yazda has been a member of two USAID-funded consortiums alongside our partners IOM and HAI, and coordinates with several other non-governmental organisations on the ground via referral systems.

In the 3rd year of partnership with USAID, IOM and with HAI, Yazda supported vocational trainings and apprenticeship opportunities, and distributed small grants to beneficiaries for the reopening of small businesses. Despite the pandemic slowing down the small local economy, these businesses responded to key marked needs and thrived.

Holistic Approach to Survivors in IDP Camps

A response to displacement, severe trauma, health conditions, and livelihood challenges

The 2019 one year project supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands to support Yazidi survivors in the Dohuk area was extended into 2021. Most beneficiaries are victims of SGBV and the holistic care provided includes PSS individual and group sessions, legal assistance for the replacement of documents and livelihood support to re-establish avenues of income for the most vulnerable. Several families received livestock (sheep) that are raised in land secured by rental agreements out of camps. This has enabled beneficiaries to produce milk and dairy products, for both self consumption and for sale, representing a valid income generating activity, while providing the flexibility of transporting the flock to Sinjar when they will choose to return. In 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in Camps lockdown and in the loss of all livelihood and income for hundreds of families, Yazda diverted resources to provide over 170 families with immediate aid through food distributions.

A special focus is on promoting community awareness on the rights of survivors to access reparations and on their legal rights. Yazda's legal department is training a selected group of survivors to advocate both in Iraq and internationally, for their rights and on legal avenues for transitional justice.

As a part of this project, Yazda launches the Yazidi Survivors Network ("YSN"), the first ever survivor network in Iraq, to support survivors of genocide and sexual enslavement committed by the so-called Islamic State (IS also known as "Daesh"). The YSN aims to empower survivors to speak out about their experiences, express their needs, fight for justice, and promote international accountability and human rights. It also advocates for the expansion of effective programs and services for survivors and vulnerable communities in Iraq and Syria.

Administrative Support for Survivors

A response to loss of identity cards, marriage certificates, and to enable access to staff funded pensions

A crucial part of Yazda's work is to provide administrative support to survivors to enable access to other service providers, particularly the Iraqi Government. We have successfully assisted survivors to access:

- Small pensions (Bataqa Cards): Largely thanks to Yazda's 2016 lobbying campaign, the Iraqi Central Government's Social Affairs Department agreed to pay a life lasting monthly pension specifically to Yazidi survivors of the 2014 genocide. Yazda successfully supported over 900 survivors and is following up on another 350 cases.
- One-off payments for survivors through a Financial scheme provided by Freedom House, an independent organization dedicated to protecting democracy and human rights.
- Copies of Identity Cards and other documents that were lost during the conflict.

Support to Education Systems

A response to the lack of services in Sinjar

In the Sinjar post-genocide environment, schools are slowly reopening, but government funding is insufficient to compensate teachers for their time, and the schools are only partially rebuilt and lack much of the teaching equipment and materials.

Many children who remain in displacement in IDP Camps for some years, have not been able to access formal education. As they are now back in Sinjar, they face a gap in the trajectory of their education.

In 2020 and with generous funding from USAID and support from IOM, Yazda continued to support 35 teachers by paying their stipends, supported 8 schools by providing teaching materials and by doing small repairs to the infrastructure, inclined to the wash facilities. In June and July, when students sat exams under the Covid-19 restrictions, Yazda in partnership with IOM provided logistics support to the day.

Support to CFM in Sinjar

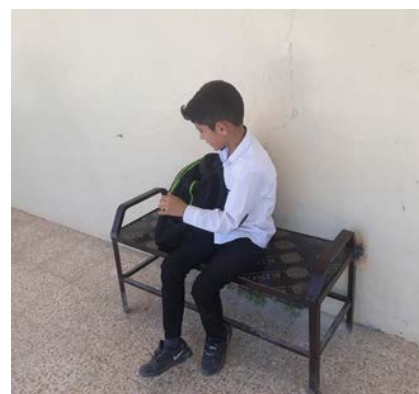
A response to Child Forced Militarization in Sinjar

Children returning from captivity under ISIS have often been victims of forced militarization and brainwashing and carry the severe trauma of participating in, or witnessing acts of war and extreme violence. Poverty and lack of opportunities can put them at risk of furtherer forced or voluntary militarisation under other armed groups active in the region, including with the families' consent and for purposes such as accessing an income or for the possibility of revenge against other communities, perpetuating regional and local conflict.

This pilot project supported by NPA aimed firstly at supporting the children and youth survivors of forced militarisation under ISIS in their journey to integration and socialisation.

Through its advocacy component is also promoted Children Rights amongst the community and opened a dialogue on the consequences of forced militarisation, promoting alternatives such as providing vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities to adults in families where children are at risk due to extreme poverty.

This project helped to shed light on the current situation, the actors, the mechanisms of forced recruitment, the loyalties involved, the culture and mentality allowing it, and will enable the draft of precise action plans to address CFM in the future.



Sustainable and Resilient Livelihood Projects

A response to the destruction of farms and small economy in Sinjar

In its second year, the Sustainable and Resilient Livelihood Development project aims to increase agricultural production and to improve access to nutritious food. This 24-month project in Sinjar City and in selected surrounding villages aims to promote sustainable economic development through income-generating opportunities in the private sector for vulnerable groups. Yazda established 32 agricultural and 32 nonagricultural small businesses, and provided vocational training to build resilience in rural communities through capacity building in positive coping strategies and risk-sensitive agricultural practices. The target villages that rely heavily on agriculture are Ash Shabiya, Al Sabahia, Al Naseriya, Zumani, Qizil Kand, and Tal Qasab.

This Project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Yazda and Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB).

Mobile Medical Unit

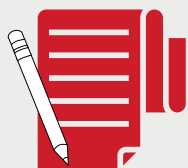
A response to lack of health services in remote villages

In September 2020, Yazda in partnership with Stichting Vluchteling was renewed for another 12 months. While providing medical assistance to the North Side of Sinjar Mountain, the focus is now shifted from the general provision of health care to the more specific Non Communicable Diseases (NCD). These are seen as medical emergencies that can be managed through prevention, by promoting a healthy lifestyle and by helping patients to become independent through knowledgeable self medication that will ease the burden on the care system. A further focus on Mental Health is at the center of the new MMU strategy, as this is often the cause of the neglect of the person's other health aspects. A team consisting of a medical doctor, a pharmacist and two nurses visit 14 remote villages in Sinjar on a weekly basis. The Mobile Clinic served more than 1,600 patients per month, including tens of cases of chronic illnesses and NCDs, supporting many with essential medicines and lab tests.



Humanitarian work

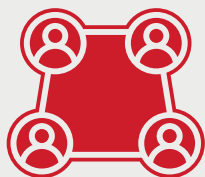
Advocacy Work: Fighting for Justice, Accountability and genocide Recognition



Genocide documentation



Media engagement



Meetings and conferences

Our legal and documentation work continued for the 6th year, focussing on interviewing survivors of genocide and offering the testimonies collected at the trials of ISIS fighters in Courts in European countries. In Iraq, Yazda's advocacy work culminated on the 3 August with the 6th Conference for the Commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide. Held online, it provided an opportunity for high profile politicians and representatives of the international community to come together and review the situation of the Yazidi community.

In 2020 Yazda's international advocacy work continued and adapted to the new online format of international meetings. Survivors are supported to speak up about their experiences and needs, and to advocate for justice and accountability and for greater minority rights, women's rights, and human rights in Iraq; the necessity of greater Yazidis, Christians and other minority involvement and leadership positions within Iraqi government and society; the dire status of Sinjar and the Nineveh Plain and the urgency of rebuilding and opening up Sinjar and the larger Nineveh Plains region.

Recognition of the genocide and acknowledgement of ISIS crimes

On 29 November 2019 and after 2 years of continued work, Yazda and in partnership with the Estoril Conferences successfully lobbied the Members of the Portuguese Parliament to vote unanimously on the recognition of the genocide against Yazidi people in Iraq by ISIS, also known as Daesh.

Yazda's work with Amal Clooney, Nadia Murad and our partners over the past five years have led to similar motions which have been passed in different countries which include cross party support by the British House of Commons, US congress, L'Assemblée nationale in France, the European Parliament, the Canadian House of Commons, the Australian Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Armenian Parliament.

Recognition and acknowledgement of the ISIS genocide and other crimes is extremely vital as an emotional remedy for the victims and in supporting efforts towards justice and the accountability process.

Yazda 2020 Conference: The 6th Annual Commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide: Bridging the Gap between Terror & Humanity

The future of the Yazidis and other ethnic and religious minorities remains under critical threat. Sinjar, known to the Yazidis as the core of their ancestral homeland, continues to be in turmoil against the backdrop of complex geopolitics hindering the chances of comprehensive community recovery from genocide. In August 2014, Sinjar was the target of systematic extermination by the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), resulting in the killing and enslaving of tens of thousands of men, women, and children. Almost 2,800 Yazidis are still held captive. Many states and organizations have already recognized that the crimes committed by ISIS against the Yazidis constitute genocide. They include the United Nations, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the House of Representatives of the United States of America, and the parliaments of Armenia, Australia, Canada, France, Scotland, the United Kingdom, and Portugal. Furthermore, Canada's former Minister of Foreign Affairs recognized the ISIS atrocities as genocide, as has the Kurdistan Regional Government's President and Minister of Foreign Relations. Yazda continues to advocate for the international recognition of ISIS crimes against the Yazidis as amounting to genocide, not only out of recognition to the victims but also as a step towards a judicial reckoning against those who perpetrated said-crimes.

On the 2nd and 3rd of August 2020, Yazda, with the support of the Zovighian Partnership, will hold a virtual conference for the 6th annual commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide. The security situation in Sinjar remains fragile. Despite the presence of multiple security players, ISIS still attempts to re-infiltrate and cause harm. Recently, many Yazidis returned to their homeland, but the local district administration has not been re-established since 2017, and both administrative and security issues instrumental to the stabilization of Sinjar remain unresolved. However, the Iraqi Central Government and Kurdistan Regional Government negotiations on disputed areas, including Sinjar, have finally been evolving since the new Iraqi government took office. The Iraqi government and the international community must act now with urgency to address the essential pillars of stability, security, administration, and reconstruction. They would facilitate the safe and voluntary return of more than 80 percent of the Sinjar-displaced population.

On the occasion of the 6th annual commemoration of the genocide, Yazda calls upon the Iraqi Central Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government and all international actors to:

1. Immediately resolve, and without delay, the issue of the dual local administration in Sinjar, in coordination with the Yazidi community;
2. Restore and maintain security in Sinjar by increasing the size of competent local security forces and addressing the serious issues related to the many non-state armed groups still operating in the region;
3. Accelerate reconstruction efforts in Sinjar, by including Yazidi representatives – importantly, Yazidi women – in all decision-making processes that are determining the future chances of survival of the community at large;
4. Urgently ensure the provision of basic services to Sinjar, including electricity, water, healthcare, and education;
5. Protect, preserve and exhume mass graves in Sinjar to allow families of victims to bury their loved ones properly and achieve closure, while also ensuring comprehensive safe guarding and documentation of all evidence of genocide;
6. Take the necessary steps to secure accountability for the crimes committed against the Yazidis and other minority groups. This includes the necessary forms of justice against citizens of all countries who joined the ISIS and participated in committing these crimes while pursuing a discourse that openly acknowledges the nature of the Yazidi Genocide;
7. Enact legislation nationally and internationally with clearer definitions for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide;
8. Provide reparation to all ISIS victims;
9. Ensure an internationally coordinated cooperation effort across all investigations of crimes against the Yazidis; and
10. Once retributive justice is served, design reconciliation programs in consultation with the Yazidi community and thoroughly implement these in Sinjar to ensure peaceful cohabitation between different groups.

Advocating for Justice and Accountability

Documentation and legal Project Project:

In 2020, Yazda documentation legal team continued its work for the 6th consecutive years, with thanks to the generous funding from our partners USG, GIZ, IOM and CJA. The team also continued to build and to maintain partnerships especially with the following entities: JRR, IOM, local NGOs, law enforcement agencies (Germany, France, The Netherlands, Australia, Sweden and UK), the Yezidi Australian Association, the Australian Centre for International Justice, the UN Commission of inquiry on Syria, Mukwege Foundation, the Global Survivors Fund, Europol, the Genocide Network, French MPs, the Yazidi Legal Network etc.

Activity 1 – Strengthen participation of victims in criminal proceedings

1.1. Sharing evidence to support ongoing criminal proceedings

Yazda and its legal team led by Human Rights Lawyer, Ms. Amal Clooney continued supporting all current legal cases in Germany against ISIS members who committed crimes against the Yazidi community.

Jennifer W case

Jennifer W., a 29-year-old German female, left Germany and travelled to Syria in 2014, married a 37-year-old Iraqi ISIS member, Taha A.J. and joined the command structure of ISIS. In 2015, the couple “purchased” and enslaved a 5-year-old Yazidi girl, Rania and her mother. They held the pair as captives in inhumane living conditions. One day, to punish Rania for wetting her mattress, Taha A.J. chained to a window and exposed to the blazing summer heat which resulted in her death. The mother was also punished and suffered severe burns when forced to stand outside in temperatures of 50C. In statements during court, Rania’s mother explained how Jennifer W. held a gun to her head and said “If you don’t stop, I’ll kill you” when she was crying after her daughter’s death.

The trial of Jennifer W. began on 9 April 2019 in the Higher Regional Court of Munich. She was charged with murder as a war crime, membership of a foreign terrorist organisation (ISIS), violations of the German War Weapons Control Act, crimes against humanity (enslavement and torture with fatal outcome) and human trafficking. The mother joined as “accessory prosecutor” after she was identified by Yazda in Iraq.



Jennifer W. concealed her face in court

Taha A.J. case

Taha A.J. was issued with a European Arrest Warrant on 18 April 2019, based on evidence gathered at trial against his wife Jennifer W. He is accused of having prohibited the Yazidi woman and her daughter from exercising their religion, forcing them to convert to Islam, severely and repeatedly abusing and punishing them, regarding the woman and her daughter as his “property” and thus exercised gender-based power of domination over the women. Further accusations include punishing both mother and daughter when the child wet her mattress. The mother suffered severe burns when forced to stand outside in temperatures of 50C. Her daughter Rania was chained to a window and exposed to the blazing summer heat which resulted in her death.

Taha A.J. was charged with genocide (murder, causing serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting living conditions capable of bringing about physical destruction), crimes against humanity murder, enslavement with fatal outcome, torture, deprivation of liberty), war crimes (murder, inhuman treatment), murder, human trafficking and membership in a terrorist organisation.

He has been on trial before the Higher Regional Court Frankfurt since April 2020, and it is the first Islamic State fighter to be accused of genocide against the Yazidis at trial. This trial is important as it is the first time an accused in an international crime is being tried in Germany, despite the fact that neither the perpetrator nor the victim are German nationals, the crime occurred in Iraq, and, most pertinently, the accused was not even on German soil when he was apprehended.

Omaima A. case

Omaima A., a 36-year-old German/Tunisian travelled to Syria in 2015 with her three young children to join ISIS fighter husband, Nadar H. The defendant in her apartment for several hours a 13-year-old Yazidi girl who was entrusted to Omaima A. by a friend. The defendant remarried Denis Cuspert, a high-ranked ISIS member after the death of her first husband.

In October 2020, the defendant was convicted for enslaving a 13 -year-old girl as a crime against humanity under the German Code of Crimes Against International Law (CCAIL), possessing an illegal weapon, joining a foreign terrorist organisation, violating the duty of care towards her children, human trafficking of a minor for the purposes of labour exploitation and deprivation of personal liberty.



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Sarah O. case

In 2013, Sarah O. (she was then 15-years old) travelled to Syria to join ISIS and married a high-ranking German-Turkish ISIS fighter named Ismail S., who is still at large. The pair enslaved a total of seven female Yazidi survivors from 2015, some of whom were resold to others. The defendant subjected the captives to slave labour, beatings, and some of them were raped by her husband with her permission and assistance.

Three Yazidi victims joined the proceeding as “accessory prosecutors”. The public is excluded from this proceeding as Sarah O. was a minor when the alleged events took place.

1.2. Sharing evidence to support UN agencies investigating ISIS crimes

Yazda signed an MoU with UNITAD in March 2019 and since that day is continuously sharing information and evidence and facilitating access to victims.

Yazda supported UNITAD in the exhumations of mass graves in Kocho and Solagh.

On 24 October 2020, the Iraqi authorities (the Directorate of Mass graves of the Martyrs Foundation), in cooperation with the UN Investigative Team for Accountability of Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) and the International Commission on Missing Persons(ICMP), exhumed the last and 17th mass grave in the village of Kocho, Sinjar and began the exhumation of the mass grave in Solagh, containing the remains of Yazidi elderly women executed by ISIL.

The exhumation process led to the transportation of the remains of the mortuary of the Martyrs Foundation in Baghdad where the identification process resumed. In the next coming days and weeks, the medico legal team of the Martyrs Foundation collected DNA samples of family members.

Yazda was very happy to support and accompany the community before during, and after the exhumations by deploying its team of Case Managers who conducted focal group discussions prior to the exhumation and who provided emotional support on the day of the events.

Yazda Medical Mobile Unit provided with medical assistance to the community where needed and remained available long time after to answer questions from victim's family members. Yazda Documentation and media teams filmed the official speeches, report on the ceremony and interviewed the authorities and partners, including the Iraqi Forensic Team and representatives of UNITAD and ICMP who were conducting the outreach campaign. The community was invited to provide feedback on the process and possible concerns regarding the exhumation and identification process. The broadcast on social media reached those who were not able to attend, including the Yazidi community worldwide.

1.3. Sharing evidence to support EU public prosecutors and war crime units investigating ISIS crimes

Yazda has also established strong connections with EU war crimes units and public prosecutors (notably in Germany, France and The Netherlands). Yazda is also in touch with Europol.

These agencies often have the problem that when a suspected former IS foreign fighters returns to Europe they do not have evidence on this and on any involvement in international crimes. Yazda has collected have led to the indictment of two German IS members ([Jennifer W.](#) and [Sarah O.](#)) for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Germany. The first genocide trial started and was supported by information provided by Yazda ([Taha A.J.](#) case). In all these cases, Yazidi survivors are key witnesses of the prosecutors and they also participate in the trials as civil parties supported by the team of Ms. Amal Clooney. So, these survivors are playing a key role in the international judicial recognition of the crimes committed against the Yazidi people. Moreover, they might help to make those European countries safer places.

Activity 2 – Strengthen participation of victims in reparation initiatives

2.1. A Yazidi Survivors Network

Yazda also launched in February 2020 a [Yazidi Survivors Network \(YSN\)](#), the first ever Survivor Network in Iraq, to support survivors of genocide and sexual enslavement. This network aims to empower survivors to speak out about their experiences, express their needs, fight for justice, and promote international accountability and human rights. It also advocates for the expansion of effective programs and services for survivors and vulnerable communities in Iraq. By both training and updating survivors on the issues at stake and directly involvement them in advocacy related to them, Yazda is applying a survivor-centered approach and a holistic approach of Dealing with the Past .

Its 15 current members followed a [cycle of training](#) covering a range of topics including introduction to international law, transitional justice, reparations and advocacy. Yazda was planning to conduct further capacity-building with the survivors from March 2020 onwards but this was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, Yazda conducted online sessions with all the members to update them about the reparation draft law and justice and accountability.



On 17 February 2020, organized with the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence (CIGE) a consultation session on the reparation draft law with 12 of the YSN members. The participants were able to provide their feedback in regard to the development of a comprehensive reparation policy tailored to their needs.

Between August 2020 and 27 October 2020), Yazda interviewed 100 survivors on the topic of the Survivors' Grant Scheme and will prepare a report to be released in 2021. In 2019, Iraq offered interim compensation measures in the form of a one-off payment to Yazidi survivors. On 17th March 2019 the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoMD) launched a grant scheme (hereafter "Survivors' Grant Scheme") to provide 899 Yazidi women survivors with a one-off payment of 2 million Iraqi Dinar each (equivalent to approximately USD 1,670).

The programme was implemented in close coordination with KRG's Ministry of Interior and the Office of Kidnapped and Rescue Affairs. According to the Office of Kidnapped and Rescue Affairs contacted by Yazda on 18 May 2020, 870 Yazidi women have benefited from this payment so far. According to the Office another 1,390 survivors have not received any payment because of a lack of funding from the MoMD. Yazda receives regular complaints from Yazidi survivors asking why only certain survivors have received the grant. Therefore, in addition to not providing the one-off payment to all the Yazidi survivors, the programme has also faced some criticism due to the lack of clarity surrounding its eligibility criteria and beneficiary selection process.

Further clarification on the programme should hence be provided in order to ensure its effectiveness and safeguard its legitimacy. Moreover, there is a need to advocate to obtain the one-off payment for all survivors.

2.2. Coalition-building with Iraqi NGOs on reparation

In order to work in an inclusive manner, Yazda joined in November 2019 the Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR). The coalition is an alliance of Iraqi civil society organizations (CSOs), supporting reparation claims of survivors and other victims of crimes perpetrated during the ISIS conflict. C4JR currently consists of 24 organizations. Yazda is one of the five members of the coalition's coordinating committee, in charge of the implementation of the conclusions of the C4JR General Meeting and participates in this capacity in weekly meetings with the other four members.

As part of this coalition, Yazda participated and support the draft of a law on reparation for CRSV victims in Iraq. Yazda was an active member within the coalition for the advocacy campaign on the law.

Yazda involved the YSN members in its **Nobody's Listening project**. The Nobody's Listening project includes a groundbreaking Virtual Reality experience and immersive exhibition programme that commemorates the Yazidi genocide initiated by ISIS in the summer of 2014 in northern Iraq. Using cutting-edge Virtual Reality technology, photography and art, the exhibition explores the consequences of the genocidal campaign by ISIS – its devastating effect on persecuted communities and their cultural heritage. Above all, “Nobody's Listening” pays tribute to the courage, determination and agency of the survivors, and gives them a space where they can be heard by people around the world. Several YSN members were featured in an advocacy campaign of the project.

YSN participated in Yazda Annual Commemoration Conference

For the second year, YSN members participated as some of high level and key note speakers during the annual commemoration conference of the Yazidi genocide. Salwa Saido was one of the opening keynote speakers on the first day of the conference. Zina Khallat Sulaiman was one of the opening keynote speakers on the second day of the conference, while Zina Haji engaged in a plenary session on the topic of Housing and dignity.

Prior to the conference all YSN members, the conference speakers in particular, were supported by Yazda team and Lynn Zovighian, Managing Director at Zovighian Partnership, and received several training sessions on public speaking and writing authentic and personal remarks.



Survivor Voice: empower survivors to speak out about their needs

Our advocacy efforts aim to support genocide survivors to speak about their experiences and needs. Yazda is the first NGO to support Yazidi survivors to speak about their experiences and needs. One of the successful examples of Yazda's support to survivors is Nadia Murad's campaign. Yazda has proudly managed, supported and funded the high-level advocacy campaign of Nadia Murad from the beginning of 2015 until it resulted in her winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018. Yazda also supported Nadia Murad to write her book, *The Last Girl*, and to participate in her Documentary Film "On Her Shoulders." Yazda has also supported other survivors including Farida Khalaf, Halal Safel, Nisrin Rasho and Dalal Khairo to disseminate their messages worldwide. Due to the ongoing high demands for survivors to speak about their experiences, Yazda decided at the end of 2019 to establish the first ever Yazidi Survivors Network (YSN) to support survivors of genocide and sexual enslavement committed by the so-called Islamic State (IS also known as "Daesh").

The YSN will empower survivors to speak out about their experiences, express their needs, fight for justice, and promote international accountability and human rights. It will also advocate for the expansion of effective programs and services for survivors and vulnerable communities in Iraq.

Engaging with Policy Makers

As a part of these global advocacy efforts, in 2020 and despite the outbreak of Corona Virus, Yazda advocated in Iraq, US, UK, EU Countries, Australia and met with a number of world policymakers including politicians, UN and International NGOs leaders, universities, human rights activists.



Financial Report

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

(Stated in USD)

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>01 Jan to 31 Dec 2020</u>
Grants and other income	1,3	1,691,451
Project expenditures		
Personnel costs	4	1,021,887
Program costs	5	1,176,054
Office and administration personal costs	4	322,775
Administration Costs	6	251,084
		2,771,800
Financial gains/loss	7	(20,277)
Total Expenditures		2,751,523
Net income/ (expenditure)		(1,060,072)
Total funds brought forward		1,406,315
Total funds carried forward		346,242

Statement of Financial Position

(Stated in USD)

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>31 Dec 2020</u>
Fixed asset	8	48,998
Current assets		
Cash in bank and in hand	9	304,926
Current liabilities		
Other creditors	10	(7,682)
Net current assets		297,244
Total net assets		346,242
Total funds		346,242

Notes to the financial statements

(Stated in USD)

1. General

Yazda is a global community-led institution that protects and champions all religious and ethnic minority communities, including Assyrians, Chaldeans, Kakais, Shabak, Turkmen, and Yazidis in Iraq, the Kurdistan Region, and Syria.

Founded in 2014 at the onset of the genocide perpetuated by Da'esh, also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) against the Yazidis, as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity against other minorities, Yazda leads advocacy and strategic projects in Dohuk, Sinjar, and the Nineveh Plains, as well as global diaspora hubs.

We work hand-in-hand with our partners, including United Nations agencies, key donor governments, the Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Governments, and instrumental community organizations to ensure justice, accountability, and a sustainable future for all are swiftly reached.

We are fervently determined to ensure Never Again, so that no community and people ever face genocide.

Yazda is registered in the US, UK, Iraq, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Sweden, and Australia. Our very hard-working multinational volunteer teams in these countries and around the world are working on advocacy, raising awareness, and building relations with governments, and local and international organisations to get the required support for our team in Iraq. Our on-the-ground team in Iraq is working to provide essential services to survivors of ISIS atrocities, IDPs, refugees, people with special needs, and families with low incomes. Yazda has a Global Board who oversees all of Yazda's activities, designs Yazda's strategy, and holds responsibility for all of Yazda's work.

In addition, Yazda has local volunteer boards in the US, UK, Sweden, Germany, Australia, and Iraq. These local boards are responsible for running Yazda's branches, managing Yazda's Global Volunteer Network, delivering Yazda's strategy in those countries, and ensuring that Yazda follows the applicable laws of these countries.

In Iraq, Yazda is led by the Yazda Country Director, who manages and oversees Yazda's staff and projects in Iraq. The Country Director in Iraq is supported by other core staff in Iraq, such as the Finance Manager, M&E Director, HR Director, Procurement and Logistics Director, and Projects Managers to manage Yazda's day to day activities on the ground.

Yazda has bank accounts in Iraq, US, UK only and follow the relevant non-government and charities regulation and policies in these countries.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

2.1 Basis of Preparation

The financial statement has been prepared in accordance with YAZDA's financial accounting handbook.

The financial statement has been prepared according to the accrual basis of accounting.

2.2 Revenue

The accrual basis in an accounting method that recognizes revenue as it is earned. In case for which no quid pro quo is required, such as gifts, income is recognized in accounts when the following three criteria have been met:

- 1-The organization must be legally entitled to the income in question.
- 2- It must be reasonably certain that the income in question will be received.
- 3- It must be possible to adequately measures the income in question.

2.3 Expenses

As for the expenditures, these are compared to and carried to expenses simultaneously with the activity that incurred the expenditure in question. This applies on both the costs incurred to obtain funds and to those incurred in order to realize the program objectives. Expenses that cannot be directly attributed to activities are carried to expenses as and when they occur.

2.4 Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at transaction price (which is usually the invoice price). Loans and other financial liabilities are initially recognized at transaction price net of any transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortized cost determined using the effective interest method.

2.5 Foreign currency transactions:

All Expenditures paid in different currencies other than the United States Dollar (USD) are translated into USD using the average monthly exchange rate for such currency. At the end of each reporting period foreign currency monetary items are translated at the closing rate of exchange. Non-monetary items that are measured at historical cost are translated at the rate ruling at the date of the transaction. All differences are charged to profit or loss.

The Financial Statement has been presented in USD.

2.6 Property, plant and equipment

Tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulative depreciation and any accumulative impairment losses. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset evenly over its expected useful life, as follows:

Freehold buildings:	over 50 years
Leasehold land and buildings:	over the lease term
Plant and machinery:	over 5 years
Fixtures, fittings, tools and equipment:	over 5 years
Computers:	over 3 years

3. Grants and donations

01 Jan to
31 Dec 2020

Grant Income	1,616,500
Donations and gifts	74,826
Other income	125
	(1,691,451)

4. Personnel Costs

01 Jan to
31 Dec 2020

Salaries for project personnel	1,021,887
Salaries for office and administration staff	322,774
Staff benefits	29,843
International travel	14,171
	(1,388,675)

5. Program Costs

01 Jan to
31 Dec 2020

Youth support activities	16,001
Medical supplies and equipment	42,219
Workshops and training activities	113,822
Advocacy activities	55,148
Logistic support activities	106,763
Utilities and supplies	9,988
Travel and accommodation	3,664
Rent	25,130
Incentives	70,662
Grants and cash assistant	466,349
Medical support activities	257,312
Transportation of beneficiaries	8,996
	(1,176,054)

	01 Jan to 31 Dec 2020
6. Administration Costs	
Travel and accommodation	17,388
Communication costs	22,666
Consultancy fees	141
Office rent	35,497
Vehicle Fuel & Maintenance	6,329
Bank fees	32,929
Audit	14,199
Generator fuel & Maintenance	12,844
Other costs	29,506
Depreciation	12,250
Legal fees	1,685
Posting	379
Vehicle rent	65,270
	(251,184)

	01 Jan to 31 Dec 2020
7. Financial gains/loss	
Currency exchange gains	(21,700)
Currency exchange loss	1,423
	(20,277)

	01 Jan to 31 Dec 2020
8. Property, plant and equipment	
Cost	
Balanced as at 1 January 2020	-
Additions	61,248
Disposals	-
Balance as at 31 December 2020	61,248
Depreciation	
Balanced as at 1 January 2020	12,250
Charge for the year	-
Disposals	12,250
Balance as at 31 December 2020	
	48,998
Net book value as at 31 December 2020	

9. Cash at bank and in hand	01 Jan to 31 Dec 2020
Cash at bank	304,926
10. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	01 Jan to 31 Dec 2020
Accruals and deferred income	7,682

THANK YOU!

Our gratitude goes out to our partners who supported us, encouraged us, trusted us and were part of Yazda's 2020 journey.

Without you, none of this would have been achieved. Thank you to:



... and to Yazda's many other friends ...



Yazda

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