



Open Letter to UN Special-Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Wairimu Nderitu

H.E. Ms. Wairimu Nderitu  
UN Special Adviser on Genocide Prevention  
United Nations Secretariat  
42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017

7 December 2020

**Re: Reparations for Atrocity Crimes Against Civilians Committed During the Da'esh/ISIL Conflict in Iraq**

Your Excellency,

The Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) extends its congratulations on your appointment as the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. C4JR is an alliance of Iraqi civil society organizations, representing Iraq's linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, supporting reparation claims of survivors and other victims of crimes perpetrated during the conflict with Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq. By using language of reparations, C4JR seeks not only to repair harm done to victims but also to induce greater change in Iraq towards overall respect and observance of human rights.

You can be assured of our support to you and your Office in strengthening Iraq's capacity to prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and uphold its responsibility to protect all communities in Iraq.

Since 2003, Iraq has suffered internecine conflict and state collapse, degrading a once rich cradle of ancient ethno-religions and cultures. During the Da'esh/ISIL created conflict in Iraq, at least 30,000 civilians were killed, 55,000 injured and more than 3 million were displaced. Minority communities including Christians, Yazidis, Sabean-Mandaeans, Turkmen, Kaka'i, and Shabaks were particularly targeted and faced existential threats.

Da'esh/ISIL exploited the concomitant deterioration of religious freedoms as part of their genocidal campaign against ethno-religious minorities across the Sinjar region and the Nineveh plains. The targeted violence sought to erase the presence of religious minorities in Iraq altogether, and particularly of the Yazidis, decried by Da'esh/ISIL as devil-worshippers.

We welcome the efforts already taken to safeguard religious freedom and to counter narratives of violent extremism in Iraq, such as the Interfaith Statement on the Victims of Da'esh/ISIL endorsed by religious leaders from the Christian, Sunni, Shia and Yazidi communities, and supported by the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) and your Office. However, without justice religious communities will

continue to face persecution and the threat of repeated violence. The main focus thus far has been, and rightly so, on criminal accountability for past atrocities. Yet, much wider engagement is necessary, crafted in close contact with victims themselves. In addition to material compensation, restitution and rehabilitation, a range of measures falling within satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition are necessary to avoid further human rights violations and/or defuse situations that can lead to outburst of violence amounting to genocide.

We are thankful that one of the themes of this year's International Day to Commemorate the Victims of Genocide will focus on reparations. Repairing the harm done to victims of gross human rights violations should be of utmost priority not only for states where the violation took place but also for the international community and people worldwide.

We respectfully request the opportunity to brief you on the work of the Coalition during your next visit to Iraq or via an online platform. In your remarks at the International Day to Commemorate the Victims of Genocide we urge you to highlight the importance of reparations for victims of Da'esh/ISIL atrocities and encourage the Government of Iraq to expedite the passing of the draft Reparations Bill. Finally, we request your Office to consider writing a report on the nexus between the non-repetition of genocide and reparations.

Sincerely Yours,

[C4JR member organizations]

1. ASUDA
2. Better World Organization
3. Bishkoreen
4. Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq (CAPNI)
5. Civil Development Organization
6. Emma Organization
7. Free Yazidi Foundation
8. Ghasin Al-Zaiton Organization for Youth
9. Hammurabi Organization for Human Rights
10. Harikar
11. Iraqi Institution for Development
12. Jinda Organization
13. Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights
14. Justice Organization for Minority Rights
15. Lotus Flower
16. Methra Organization for Yarsani Culture and Development
17. Nadia's Initiative
18. National Center for Human Rights
19. Nisha Organization

20. Peace and Freedom Organization
21. Tajdid Iraq
22. To Reconcile Organization
23. Turkmen Rescue Foundation
24. Women Leadership Institute
25. Women's Legal Assistance Organization (WOLA)
26. Yazda
27. Yezidi Organization for Documentation

[International Partners]

Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights

Fight for Humanity

Genocide Watch

Global Survivors Fund

Impunity Watch

Madre

Minority Rights Group International