

# Welcome to the Fifth C4JR YSL NEWSLETTER

The Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) is publishing regular newsletters on the Yazidi Survivors' Law (YSL) starting July 2023 in three languages; Arabic, English, and Kurdish (Kurmanji and Sorani). Our goal is to share accurate and up-to-date information regarding the YSL and share the views and experiences of all actors included in the implementation of this seminal transitional justice framework to address atrocities committed by ISIL in Iraq.

## Latest News on the YSL

### Application Statistics

The Directorate of Survivors' Affairs (Directorate) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs announced the payment of reparations to 1,535 survivors of ISIL covered by the Yazidi Survivors' Law in February, bringing the total number of YSL beneficiaries to 1,651. Of the total number of individuals receiving YSL reparations, 1,172 currently reside in Iraq, while 479 are located outside Iraq. Among these YSL beneficiaries, 847 are women and girl survivors (817 Yazidi, 13 Turkmen, 10 Shabak, 7 Christian), 784 Yazidi survivors who were children at the time of kidnapping (436 male and 348 female), and 20 survivors of mass graves. More details can be found on the Directorate's Facebook page: <https://web.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076062182514>.

### Implementation of the YSL

The YSL includes reparation benefits to be provided to each individual who is approved as a survivor. These include 1) monthly reparation payments; 2) rehabilitation services; 3) return to education; 4) priority in public employment; and 5) a housing unit or land. The Directorate is actively rolling out certain benefits like reparations payments, referring survivors to supporting NGOs for rehabilitation support, and allocating plots of land to YSL beneficiaries while continuing to address more complex benefits for future implementation.

### Important updates:

- The Directorate has recently taken several important steps to search for victims of ISIL whose fate remains unknown as per Article 5.7 of the YSL. In February, the Directorate announced the launch of a committee to uncover the fate of missing and abducted persons.

An electronic form is available to submit data on known cases of abducted and missing persons from the four components recognized as eligible for reparations under the YSL. Individuals can register the details of missing persons, including available photographs or relevant documents, for submission to the Directorate's database. The electronic form is available at the following link: <https://sur.spa.gov.iq/>.

- On March 2, Ms. Sarab Elias, the Director General of Survivors' Affairs, supervised the return of a Yazidi survivor from al-Hol camp, in Syria, under the guidance of the Chairman of the Committee to Search for Abductees in the Office of the Prime Minister, alongside members of the committee and the National Intelligence Service.
- The Directorate is collaborating with relevant authorities to locate and repatriate the remains of deceased victims situated in regions of Syria, as stipulated in Article 5.8 of the YSL. The Directorate urges individuals with information regarding the whereabouts of victims' remains in Syria to reach out via the private message function on the Directorate's Facebook page, providing details such as the victim's name, the known location of the victim's remains, and the phone number of the victim's family. The Directorate's Facebook page can be reached via this link: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076062182514>.
- As of February 2024, the Directorate has referred 86 survivors to NGOs providing MHPSS services, 10 of whom have completed receiving the support required.
- As a result of the introduction of the new unified national ID card in Iraq, the *bitaqat al-wataniyah al-muwahhadah*, rendering the previous *hawiyah al-wataniyah* card obsolete, the Directorate met with Dr. Khaled Awani, Director of the Directorate

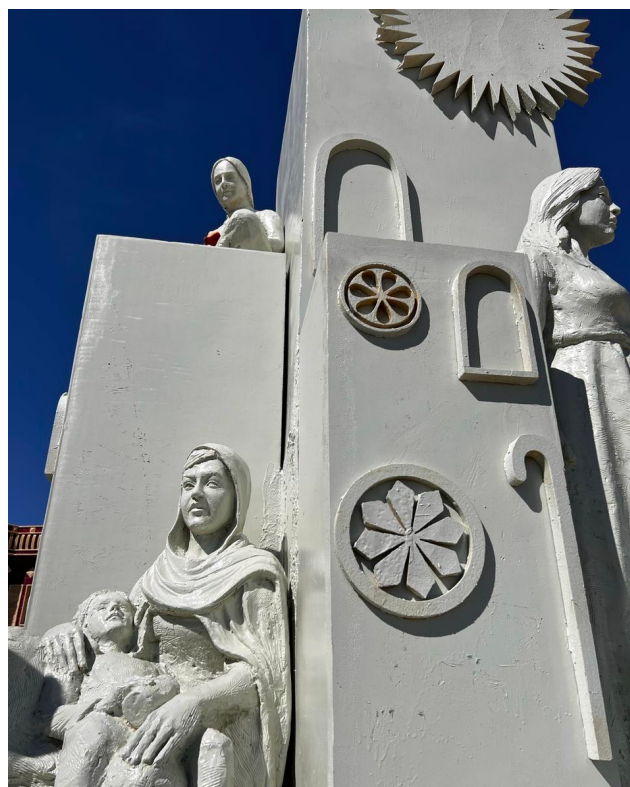
for Civil Status, Passports, and Residence in Nineveh, to discuss procedures for issuing the unified national card for survivors. Survivors living in Sinjar who are registered in the Directorate's database and wish to apply for the unified national identification card can obtain a letter of support from the Directorate to include in their application by visiting the Directorate's Sinjar office. To book an appointment at the Directorate of Unified Card Affairs, follow this link: <https://www.nid-moi.gov.iq/index.php?name=Pages&op=page&pid=104>.

- On March 1, C4JR published its Annual Report "More than 'Ink on Paper': Taking Stock Three Years After the Adoption of the Yazidi [Female] Survivors' Law." The report evaluates the current stage of implementation of reparation measures promised in the YSL and includes the latest information on the verification and appeals process, application statistics, and administrative capacity of the GDSA, highlighting the prevailing challenges that hinder the delivery of benefits in a trauma-informed and survivor-centered manner.

Download the report as a PDF here: <https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C4JR-Report-2024-Three-Years-After-YSL-1.pdf>.

Download as an E-reader here: <https://jijan.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C4JR-Report-2024-Three-Years-After-YSL.epub>.

- On February 26, the Global Survivors Fund (GSF) and their partner organization Nadia's Initiative unveiled a memorial garden in Rojhalat Park, Sinjar City, as part of GSF's interim reparations measures project. Inaugurated by survivors and the Directorate's Director General Sarab Elias, the monument embodies the suffering of survivors as well as the courage they have shown and serves as a reminder of the many Yazidi women still in captivity. This event marked the end of GSF's interim reparative measure project in Iraq which reached 1,040 survivors of CRSV in Duhok and Sinjar. For more information on the event, see: <https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/latest/articles/healing-is-a-collective-act-for-yazidis-iraq/>.



*GSF's collective interim reparative measure in Sinjar, a memorial status to all women who suffered ISIL captivity. Photo credit: Delkhwaz Hacı, GSF's Technical Advisor in Iraq.*

- C4JR's podcast series, "More Than Ink on Paper: Implementing the Yazidi Survivors' Law" published its latest episode in conversation with Mr. Saib Khidir, an Iraqi lawyer, politician, and former member of parliament who played a key role in enacting the YSL. Listen to the episode in Arabic here: <https://c4jr.org/podcast>, or read the full transcript in English here: <https://c4jr.org/0103202428409>.
- C4JR's Ethical Engagement Working Group is currently working to expand our Checklist for Media Internal Guidelines on Ethical Engagement with Survivors and a Checklist for Media Involvement and to operationalize these internal protocols. The first consultation with survivors was held in Duhok on March 15, to hear both survivors' experiences with the media and their expectations for future ethical engagement.

## Accountability Efforts

- On January 15, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Report provided guidelines on sharing evidence collected by UNITAD, as required by UNSC Resolution 2697 (2023). The report outlines what it can share with Iraq and how, and specifies that Iraq must meet the requirements laid out in international law and UN best practices and set up an internal system for properly handling such evidence. Before sharing evidence UNITAD is required to obtain informed consent from information providers. UNSG calls for a UN repository to ensure the effective use of evidence in Iraq and elsewhere. The report can be accessed here: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4034240?v=pdf>. C4JR was pleased to see many of our concerns reflected in that report, as set out here: <https://c4jr.org/2101202428341>.
- On March 12, C4JR published a new report on Iraq's request to terminate UNITAD's mandate, "Iraqi Civil Society and Survivor Networks Position on the Request of Iraq to Terminate UNITAD's Mandate in September 2024." The report outlines the concerns and recommendations of Iraqi and civil society organizations and survivor networks regarding Iraq's recent request to the UN Security Council (UNSC) to not renew UNITAD's mandate and emphasizes the importance of justice and accountability for victims and affected communities. The report and summary documents are available at the following links:  
  
Download the report here: [https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C4JR-report\\_ENG.pdf](https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C4JR-report_ENG.pdf).  
  
Download the summary document here: [https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C4JR-summary\\_ENG.pdf](https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C4JR-summary_ENG.pdf).
- On March 15, UNITAD submitted a report to the UNSC detailing the progress of its mandate completion. The report reiterates remaining tasks in Iraq, such as enacting appropriate legal frameworks, conducting investigations, evidence management, and capacity building, among others. These efforts are crucial for ensuring that the collected evidence is fully utilized. UNITAD assured that it will continue supporting Iraqi authorities until the end of its mandate. However, it emphasized that "the conclusion of the mandate on 17 September 2024, is not the same as mandate completion". The report highlights that

ending the mandate in 2024 would not allow for the proper utilization of evidence and expertise, nor would it ensure Iraq's readiness to receive and effectively utilize the evidence. UNITAD's Team seeks to clarify the requirements for mandate completion and outlines potential achievements in the medium term, contingent upon a hypothetical extension until September 17, 2025. The report will be made available on the UNITAD website in the coming days: <https://www.unitad.un.org/>.

- An investigation led by the General Public Prosecutor's Office in Portugal, in close cooperation with Judge Raed al-Mosleh, President of the Nineveh Federal Appeals Court, has resulted in the conviction of two ISIL members for international crimes committed in Iraq. UNITAD facilitated witness testimonies through video conferencing before the Portuguese judge, prosecutor, and defense lawyer. Judge Raed al-Mosleh facilitated for the defense witnesses to testify remotely, during the proceedings, from his courthouse in Mosul, marking the first time the Iraqi judiciary has arranged remote witness testimonies via video conferencing. This marks a promising development and sets a precedent for using video conferencing for YSL applicants outside Iraq.
- In February, Director General Sarab Elias hosted Judge Raed al-Mosleh at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to discuss issues related to the files of survivors of ISIL. The Director General explained the importance of giving testimony before the judiciary and providing evidence about crime perpetrators to ensure survivors' justice. Furthermore, the Director General emphasized the need to facilitate procedures survivors must follow to obtain the criminal investigation papers necessary for applying to the YSL.
- C4JR's Survivors' Council issued a statement demanding justice as stipulated in the YSL, following a televised interview with the wife of former-ISIL leader al-Baghdadi. The statement calls all investigative and judicial bodies and international committees concerned with investigating and gathering evidence to take appropriate and official measures to ensure justice. Read the statement here: <https://c4jr.org/0403202428476>.

## Challenges

Each newsletter highlights one or more challenges facing survivors or stakeholders involved in the YSL's implementation. In this issue, C4JR draws attention to the unique challenges facing survivors outside Iraq. Despite the [UR Portal](#) online YSL application system being accessible to YSL applicants residing abroad since May 2023, several issues hinder applicants abroad from meeting the YSL application requirements and successfully applying for and receiving YSL reparation benefits.

Survivors abroad consulted by C4JR currently located in Germany, were relocated to the country through the Baden-Württemberg 'Special Quota' Humanitarian Admission Program (HAP), which supported the relocation of 1,100 survivors, the majority of whom are Yazidi women and children. Since the inception of HAP in March 2015, Canada and Australia have implemented similar programs to resettle survivors. C4JR consulted with survivors participating in Australia's Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) and Canada's Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) resettlement program to understand the obstacles they encounter in claiming their right to reparation as survivors living outside Iraq. While some challenges are specific to the YSL applicant's country of residence, many are common among all YSL applicants living abroad.

*"We don't know how to apply or who can help us. I didn't hear of any organization that can help us either in Germany or outside Iraq."*

### - Yazidi survivor in Germany

Survivors located outside Iraq highlighted a lack of available information regarding the application process for YSL. Despite efforts by organizations like Farida Global Organization (FGO) to actively bridge information gaps through initiatives such as producing video messages tailored to survivors in Germany, and notwithstanding meetings hosted by the Directorate and FGO with survivors in Germany in February 2023 with organizational support from IOM, survivors consulted by C4JR continue to express a sense of inadequate support regarding applying to the YSL. A survivor consulted in Australia spoke of significant difficulties trying to communicate with the Directorate, with many of her queries left unanswered. Further outreach efforts are necessary to provide information specifically tailored to the obstacles facing survivors residing abroad, particularly regarding how these YSL applicants can resolve issues related to missing required YSL application documentation. Other survivors consulted in Australia were un-

aware of any outreach efforts conducted by the Directorate to provide information on YSL applications. Consequently, survivors in Australia lack a clear understanding of the YSL application process.

Many survivors consulted highlighted their inability to acquire the necessary documentation required for completing the YSL application while residing abroad. Applicants to the YSL must submit two forms of required documentation with their YSL application: a government-issued ID and documentation to establish that an applicant has initiated a criminal investigation against ISIL. Survivors abroad highlighted the challenge of either having expired or missing ID cards, with no current means of updating them or accessing the new unified national ID card from their current location. Obtaining the unified national ID card requires visiting the Directorate of Unified Card Affairs in Iraq to conduct proof of attendance and biometrics after which a power of attorney can be designated to complete the process.

To resolve these issues, FGO has collaborated with the Directorate in the compilation of lists of names and missing documents formally submitted to the Directorate in an official letter. In October 2023, the Directorate announced the formation of a designated committee tasked with receiving data on missing documents and that would collaborate with the relevant authorities to issue identity documentation and collect information on the specific needs of survivors outside Iraq. C4JR suggests that this committee should carry out additional outreach efforts with survivors abroad and coordinate with Iraqi diplomatic missions in countries where survivors reside to facilitate proof of attendance and biometric processes and streamline ID application procedures.

To satisfy the second application requirement for the YSL, applicants need documentation proving they have initiated a criminal investigation against ISIL. Presently, YSL applicants can only meet this requirement if they return to Iraq to testify in a Federal court and obtain the necessary investigation documents. The use of video conferencing for witness testimonies is permitted by a Supreme Judicial Council decision made in July 2023. Since doing so, the Court of Appeal in Nineveh has utilized video conferencing to facilitate witness testimony, which could set a precedent that hopefully would facilitate survivors abroad's ability to give statements in investigative courts to satisfy the evidentiary requirements and obtain investigation papers.

Survivors intending to return to Iraq to fulfill YSL application criteria encounter considerable financial, time, and child-care constraints. The travel expenses for YSL applicants in places like Canada and Australia are substantial. Survivors consulted in Toowoomba, Queensland which hosts the largest population of Yazidis in Australia, especially highlighted the significant financial burden of returning to Iraq, reaching up to AUD 3,000. Survivors in Canada and Germany also noted financial strains. Given that survivors have not yet received their entitlement to reparation and many depend on state welfare support in their initial years of relocation, these high costs impede survivors from accessing their right to reparation. Furthermore, survivors aged under 18 require a guardian to accompany them while traveling and during legal proceedings placing further financial burdens on family members.

*“As I am underage and an orphan I have no one in Iraq to help me with my application. The process is so complicated and takes time, and in the end, I might not be accepted.”*

#### - Yazidi Survivor in Australia

Survivors in Germany who remain part of the HAP have unrestricted freedom of movement to return to Iraq. This differs from asylum processes, where asylum seekers are issued a “Blue Passport” and are prohibited from obtaining an Iraqi passport or traveling back to Iraq. They risk losing their protection status and residence rights in Germany if they violate these restrictions. Survivors who have exited the HAP program to seek asylum now encounter challenges in returning to Iraq, as they are unable to do so until obtaining German citizenship and travel documents. For those who remained in the program, some survivors mentioned that their Iraqi passports have expired and the renewal process can take up to a year to complete. C4JR recommends that Iraqi diplomatic missions make efforts to facilitate the swift processing of passport renewals, thereby ensuring that YSL applicants residing abroad can maintain their freedom of movement.

*“If someone could support us to make our work lighter and our application files complete and deliver it to the Directorate, just so we don't get forgotten and we are not deprived of our benefits from the YSL. We know we have to come to Iraq but if there were someone here [in Germany] it would make the work easier.”*

#### - Yazidi Survivor in Germany

Differentiating between survivors based on their current location runs against international human rights law, as outlined in the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law. The YSL does not impose current residency as an eligibility parameter for survivors to access stipulated reparative measures, though access to employment and education in Iraq is tied to their presence there. Further clarification is necessary regarding the context-specific legal implications of receiving reparations, including potential tax obligations and impacts on survivors' eligibility for social service benefits in their country of residence. FGO, in their YSL application guidance report, stresses that reparation payments should not be subject to taxation as a matter of justice. Nonetheless, host governments in Germany and other locations have yet to acknowledge and address this issue either by enacting legislation to this effect or otherwise. Without sufficient information about these implications, survivors may be deterred from pursuing their right to reparation due to concerns about losing welfare support.

The challenges faced by survivors outside Iraq in accessing reparations through the YSL underscore the urgent need for targeted support and coordinated efforts. A concerted effort involving the Directorate, NGOs, and diplomatic stakeholders is required to overcome the barriers impeding survivors outside Iraq from accessing their rightful reparations under the YSL.



## THERE IS NO DEADLINE TO APPLY TO THE YSL! HERE IS HOW YOU CAN APPLY IF YOU ARE A SURVIVOR

The YSL provides reparations if you are a member of one of the following groups:

- Adult and minor female survivors of ISIS captivity from the Yazidi, Shabak, Christian, or Turkmen communities;
- Male Yazidis who were abducted by ISIS when they were under the age of 18 at the time they were abducted by ISIS;
- All persons from the Yazidi, Shabak, Christian, or Turkmen communities who were abducted by ISIS and personally survived a specific incident of ISIS mass killing.

Applications are made to the General Directorate for Survivors' Affairs. You can apply in three ways:

- Making an appointment with the Directorate in their Sinjar or Mosul offices and visiting the office at the appointment time. You can make the appointment at <https://ur.gov.iq/login>. See this video on how to make an appointment: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ARuIcl4gYU&ab\\_channel=IOMIRAQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ARuIcl4gYU&ab_channel=IOMIRAQ) ;
- Filling out a hard copy form and take it to the Directorate physically. You still need to register online using the link above to get your unique registration code;
- Applying online: You may submit your application, together with copies of your ID and any supporting documents you have to the link above. See this video on how to apply online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfoDfQWwErE&ab\\_channel=IOMIRAQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfoDfQWwErE&ab_channel=IOMIRAQ)

You can apply on your own - you do not need a lawyer or NGO to apply. If you would like any support with the application, you can contact NGOs in your area. **There is no deadline to apply for the YSL. There is also no fee to apply.**

You can follow the Directorate's announcements on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076062182514>

### Coming up in the next newsletter

Members of C4JR's Advocacy Working Group have completed consultations to identify the core needs and demands of survivors they work with, almost 10 years after the ISIL conflict began. As we approach the tenth anniversary of August 3, members are working on a joint campaign across C4JR, highlighting some of the issues raised in the survey.

The group aims to place survivors at the center of the campaign and foreground their voices and needs, with member NGOs serving as the channel to a broader audience. C4JR plans to publish a report on our findings, setting out the situation today and the outstanding needs. In the next newsletter, we will share some of the consultation findings from a broad range of survivors.

## Get To Know C4JR Members

In each newsletter, C4JR will highlight the YSL-related work of two C4JR member organizations, including information on where and how to reach them.

### Better World Organization for Community Development



Better World Organization is working to provide comprehensive support to survivors in Duhok and Nineveh Governorate by providing:

- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services in Khabarto Camp;
- Skill-building programs tailored to the needs of survivors aimed at aiding their recovery and resilience;
- Support to survivor networks by offering consultation, in particular working closely with the Survivors' Voices Network to assist in capacity building.

Survivors can contact Better World Organization through the organization's focal points:

- Walaa: [walaa@betterworldngo.org](mailto:walaa@betterworldngo.org) or +964 750 755 3069
- Kawther: [kawther@betterworldngo.org](mailto:kawther@betterworldngo.org) or +964 751 484 9342



### The Lotus Flower



The Lotus Flower is working to empower vulnerable women and girls, equipping them with opportunities to learn and tools to become financially independent in Duhok and Nineveh Governorate by providing:

- A women's center in Essian and Rwanga camps as well as safe social spaces for vulnerable women and girls in Essian and Rwanga camps and non-camp locations in Khanke, Shariya, Seje, and Derabun;
- Livelihood training, language courses, computer training, mental health support, fitness, and health training, available in Bashiqa, Bartella, and al-Hamdaniya locations as well as Essian and Rwanga camps and non-camp locations in Khanke, Shariya, Seje, and Derabun;
- Dedicated teams to support individual YSL application consultations and referrals in centers in Essian and Rwanga camps and Khanke, Shariya, Seje, and Derabun non-camp locations.

Survivors can contact The Lotus Flower to available of the services above at the following numbers:

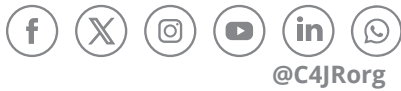
- For camp locations (Essian and Rwanga): +964 750 849 7049
- For non-camp locations (Khanke, Shariya, Seje, Derabun, Bashiqa, Bartella, al-Hamdaniya): +964 751 173 8385



## About the C4JR

The Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) is an alliance of 33 NGOs calling for comprehensive reparations for civilian victims of atrocity crimes perpetrated during the ISIL conflict in Iraq. C4JR uses Iraqi law and international human rights law to support reparation claims of survivors and to encourage Iraqi authorities to meet their obligation to provide reparations. C4JR also works to inform, advocate, offer viable solutions, and engage with different stakeholders to ensure survivors realize their right to reparations by providing space for deliberation, collaboration, and reflection.

You can visit our website at [www.c4jr.org](http://www.c4jr.org) for more information.



C4JR updates  
WhatsApp group



This publication was made possible through support provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), under the terms of the Government of the Netherlands. The opinions expressed herein are those of the Coalition for Just Reparations and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM Iraq.