

Welcome to the Sixth 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 1,726 survivors of ISIL covered by the Yazidi Survivors' Law in April. More details can be found on the Directorate's Facebook page: <https://www.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 announced the launch of its Empowerment Initiative in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, which aims to train YSL beneficiaries in various professions, including: 1) soap making; 2) candle making; 3) glass drawing; and 4) phone repair. To support the development of their income-generating projects, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs will allocate loans to participants. YSL beneficiaries interested in

participating in these courses should send the following information directly to the Directorate's Facebook page: full name, chosen project from the four listed above, current place of residence, and phone number. For more information, visit the Directorate's Facebook page via this link: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076062182514>.

- On May 29, a lottery was conducted on the grounds of the Nineveh Municipalities Directorate to distribute 262 residential plots of land to YSL beneficiaries; 250 of which in Sinjar District and 12 residential plots in Tal Afar District. The distribution of lands was carried out by the Land Distribution Committee headed by the Director of Property in the Nineveh Municipalities Directorate and in the presence of the Governor of Nineveh, Mr. Abdul Qadir Al-Dakhil, the Director of the Survivors' Affairs Department, Ms. Sarab Elias, the Director of Nineveh Municipalities, Eng Raad Al-Hadidi, and a delegation of Nineveh Governorate Council members. For more information see Nineveh Governorate Municipalities Directorate Facebook page at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/Municipalities.Nineveh>.
- In April, the Directorate held a consultation session with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), engaging with families of victims and missing persons. The purpose of the consultation was to address various issues, including the documentation of missing persons and victims of mass graves, procedures for compensation, and the challenges encountered by affected families. During the session, the Directorate provided information about the efforts of the Committee tasked with

locating abducted individuals. The Directorate emphasized the importance of maintaining close coordination with the families of victims and missing persons. As a result of the discussion, a group

comprising family members of victims was tasked with continuing engagement with the Directorate regarding the outcomes of the meeting.



The General Directorate for Survivors' Affairs and IOM hosted a consultation with families of victims and missing persons to address various issues.

Collaboration on Advocacy

- On May 7, the C4JR Advocacy Working Group met in Sharya to plan their campaign for the upcoming 10th anniversary of the Yazidi genocide and the crimes perpetrated against other communities. C4JR members, including SEED Foundation, Yazda, Hawar.Help, House of Coexistence, Better World Organisation (BWO), Free Yezidi Foundation, The Lotus Flower, Farida Global, Peace and Freedom Organisation (PFO), Justice Organization for Minority

Rights (JOMR), DAK, and Nadia's Initiative, shared ideas and expanded on survivor demands gathered from recent C4JR consultations. C4JR members discussed campaign ideas, action plans, branding strategies, and the creation of a hashtag for promotion. Ahead of the August 3 anniversary, C4JR will publish a joint report on survivor demands, and members will begin to work on their campaigns related to each demand. Stay tuned for more information! Thank you to our members for their commitment and collaboration.



C4JR's Advocacy Working Group met in DAK organization's Shariya office for campaign planning on C4JR's 10 Demands, 10 Years After ISIL Genocide.

Accountability Efforts

- In April, the UN Secretary-General's latest report on conflict-related sexual violence was published. The report commends the progress made concerning the implementation of the YSL but urges the Iraqi government to establish "a domestic legal framework for the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of international crimes, including for sexual violence." Read the report in full at the following link: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4044629?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- On May 9, C4JR's Criminal Justice Working Group hosted an internal, online Q&A event to discuss C4JR's recent position paper on the conclusion of UNITAD's mandate in Iraq. The meeting offered C4JR members and those engaged or affected by C4JR's work an opportunity to ask questions about the UNITAD wind-down process and discuss the next steps for promoting justice and accountability. Read C4JR's position paper at the following link: <https://c4jr.org/1203202428508>. To keep up-to-date on other C4JR member events, follow C4JR's Twitter account: <https://x.com/c4jrg>.
- On May 13, the Martyrs Foundation initiated the opening of the Alu Antar Well mass grave in Tel Afar's al-Ayadiya region. Under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Advisor for Human Rights, the process of exhuming and identifying bodies from the mass grave site will be carried out in collaboration with the Department of Forensic Medicine and UNITAD's expert International Investigation Team following the approval of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. For more information, visit the Martyrs Foundation Facebook page via the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/MASS.GRAVES.2017>.
- On May 14, C4JR published its submission for the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. This submission, prepared by Jiyun Foundation with specific input from C4JR's Rehabilitation Working Group, offers an overview of crimes of sexual torture committed during the war and armed conflicts in Iraq, focusing on the atrocities perpetrated by ISIL. It highlights the impact of conflict-related sexual violence on communities, including Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, Kakai, Christians,

Shia, Sunnis, and others, and underscores the urgent need for justice, accountability, and rehabilitation for survivors. Additionally, the C4JR Secretariat and Yazda participated in the Special Rapporteur on Torture's online consultation of experts and practitioners on May 14-15, providing relevant insights for her forthcoming report on wartime sexual torture. Read the submission at the following link: <https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/C4JR-Submission-for-SRT-on-ISIL-Crimes-of-Sexual-Torture-in-Iraq.pdf>.

- On May 23, coinciding with the EU Day Against Impunity for Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, and War Crimes, C4JR hosted a public online event to present its position paper on the ending of the UNITAD mandate in Iraq to a broader audience. The event, moderated by Jahann Pittalwala, Research and Advocacy Officer at the Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect, featured a distinguished panel of experts. Panelists included Baroness Helena Kennedy, Scottish barrister and Labour member of the House of Lords; Hasan Jameel, C4JR representative; Natia Navrouzov, Yazda Executive Director; Ana Peyró Llopis, Acting Special Advisor and Head of UNITAD;
- On May 25, representatives from C4JR member organizations and C4JR's Survivors Council completed a 5-day training on Ethical Engagement with Survivors of Sexual Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls. Organized by Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights and C4JR, the training took place in Duhok over two weekends. The curriculum was based on C4JR's new Toolkit for Ethical Engagement with Survivors developed by C4JR consultant Sherizaan Minwalla, with contributions from Yusra al-Kailani, resilience programming trainer and psychotherapist at the Center for Victims of Torture.

Dr. Dindar Zebari, KRG Coordinator for International Advocacy; Shireen Khudeda, member of the Yazidi Survivors Network (YSN); Sarah Sanbar, researcher at Human Rights Watch; Dr. Ewelina Ochab of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute; Nicolette Waldman, Amnesty International's Senior Crisis Advisor; and Nadine Reiner, a lawyer at the Office of Amal Clooney. A recording of the event can be found on our website, with an output paper of the discussion to follow: <https://c4jr.org/3005202429061>.



Representatives of C4JR's member organizations engage in a Training of Trainers on Ethical Engagement with Survivors of Sexual Violence in Duhok.

Challenges

In each newsletter, we highlight one or more challenges facing survivors or stakeholders involved in the implementation of the YSL. In this issue, C4JR focuses on concerning developments regarding new evidentiary thresholds requested by the YSL Committee and the need for clarity from the Directorate and YSL Committee on how evidentiary requirements are determined.

According to the current guidelines outlined in the Directorate's brochure, applicants to the YSL must provide two essential forms of documentation: an ID and a criminal investigation paper to confirm an applicant has initiated a criminal investigation against ISIL. Other documents that can, if available, be submitted with an application, include:

- Testimony of three witnesses from among YSL beneficiaries (certified by a notary);
- Reports certified and issued by reputable international committees and organizations supporting survivors;
- Documents or papers issued by ISIL concerning the applicant;
- Official letters issued by security services proving the fact of escape;
- Official letters issued by governmental departments or institutions proving the fact of rescue.

The YSL Committee may request an interview with a YSL applicant if there is insufficient evidence, major inconsistencies with the application, or if an applicant was in captivity for less than one month. While the Directorate's brochure states that three witnesses are required, contradictory information has recently been provided to YSL applicants, underscoring the need for clarity on this requirement.

C4JR consultations with individual YSL applicants reveal that they are being held to a high burden of proof, with the YSL Committee requesting the corroborating testimo-

ny from two persons who were present with the applicant at the time of the crime and/or who have received reparations through the YSL. The YSL Committee requested one applicant to obtain a court document confirming they had secured two eyewitness testimonies of YSL beneficiaries corroborating their story. This demand is onerous for applicants who have already filed a criminal complaint in court. This high standard of proof can be deemed inappropriate, considering that YSL applicants are asked to present witnesses to gross human rights violations, such as mass killings and abductions, which can be retraumatizing for eyewitnesses. The UN Secretary General's latest [report](#) on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) calls for the removal of the criminal investigation document as an evidentiary requirement for the YSL application process, a [demand](#) in line with that made by many local and international organizations—including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Nadia's Initiative, Global Survivors Fund (GSF), and to which C4JR is also a signatory—which expressed concern that the criminal complaint requirement not only goes against the nonjudicial process of the law but is against “best practice in administrative reparation programmes requires special standards of proof for CRSV and other at-risk groups of survivors such as children, applying presumptions of truth based on patterns of violence and other established facts.”

As outlined in Article 8.1 of the YSL Bylaws, the YSL Committee may verify YSL applications by requesting eyewitness testimony enhanced with evidence or resorting to proofs of evidence as outlined in Evidence Law No. 107 of 1979. However, according to para. 2 of the same article, all official evidence and engagement of relevant authorities must be exhausted before resorting to proofs of evidence stipulated in the latter. Therefore, transparency and clarity are required on the matter of the YSL Committee's eyewitness request, including establishing a standard applicable across all cases to ensure that YSL applicants are treated equitably under the law.

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=6ARulcl4gYU&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

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>

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.

Háwar.Help



Háwar.Help is a human rights organization that contributes to a sustainable, resilient society in Iraq. Háwar.help's *Back to Life Project* supports internally displaced women, girls, and families who are survivors of war, destruction, and genocide to build an independent and self-determined life. They are providing services at their *Back to Life* centers located in Shariya Camp and Qadiya Camp in Duhok Governorate and offer women of all faiths a safe place to overcome traumatic experiences, learn new skills through capacity building and vocational training, and enhance their livelihoods and work experience by providing:

- Weekly literacy, computer, language, and creative craft courses;
- Educational and self-care workshops on women's rights, gender-impact of social media on community, time management, gender-based violence, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and mindfulness;
- Legal counseling on how to initiate YSL applications, guidance through the application process, and assisting with medical support;
- Awareness sessions on YSL hosted at Back to Life centers in Shariya and Qadiya camps;
- Weekly psychotherapeutic treatments, including individual and group therapy;
- Legal guidance to women and girls who have suffered from gender-based violence to assist their access to MHPSS services.

Survivors can contact Háwar.Help through the organization's focal point, Nazik Barakat Murad, at the following contact details:

Email: nazik.murad@havar.help

Phone: +964 785 959 9753 (Zain)

+964 751 746 1401 (Korek)

Peace and Freedom Organization



Peace and Freedom Organization (PFO) works in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region to protect human rights and civil rights, and to ensure peaceful coexistence through promoting trust and collaboration between diverse components of society. Their vision is of a peaceful, democratic, and diverse society that guarantees human rights and freedoms for all, promotes values of social justice, citizenship, and non-violence, and rejects extremism in all its forms. As a part of its strategy, Peace and Freedom Organization supports survivors via its Transitional Justice Program through:

- Developing evidence-based advocacy campaigns that aim to deliver the voices of diverse victims and survivors to authorities;
- Awareness raising on social and political levels about survivors' rights, reconciliation, truth-finding, and reparations;
- Conducting research, documentation, storytelling, and memory activities.

PFO is currently conducting research on the safe return of Yazidi survivors to Sinjar which is due to be published on August 3, the anniversary of the Yazidi Genocide.

Survivors can contact PFO at the following contact details:

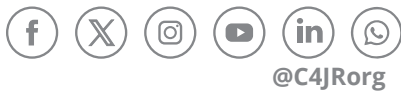
Phone: +964 771 447 0207

Email: pfomail@pfo-ku.org

About the C4JR

The Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) is an alliance of 34 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 the 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 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.