

# Welcome to the Eighth 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 1,975 survivors of ISIL covered by the Yazidi Survivors' Law in August. 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 to date collected the names and details of 679 kidnapped and missing persons via its online database. They have renewed their call to the public to submit details of missing relatives via an electronic form which will be submitted to the office of the Prime Minister and relevant security authorities to follow up on these cases. The electronic form is accessible here: <https://sur.spa.gov.iq/>.

## Related News

- The Kurdistan Regional Government, under the supervision of the Lalish Cultural and Media Center, has begun disbursing financial aid to survivors of ISIL captivity, distributing 150,000 IQD per month. The recipients of financial aid include 3,581 Yazidis listed by the Office for Rescuing Abducted Yazidis. According to Lalish Center, this financial aid payment does not contradict the enjoyment of monthly compensation payments under the YSL and survivors receiving reparation payments under the YSL are still eligible for financial aid.
- In addition to financial aid payments, registration is open for Yazidi students who wish to continue their education. ISIL survivors who have completed the ninth grade are exempt from admission requirements for government institutions under the Ministry of Education and can obtain diploma degrees. Those eligible can choose any institution they prefer or attend private institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Education at no cost. Eligible individuals can register using this [Google Form link](#).
- The UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, Dr Alice Edwards, has released her latest report to the UN General Assembly's 79th session, urging action against sexual torture in wartime and other security situations. The report, which will be presented in New York on October 25, includes a thematic study highlighting good practices and challenges in investigating, prosecuting, and preventing wartime sexual torture, as well as providing rehabilitation for victims and survivors.

The Special Rapporteur extended her gratitude to the [Jiyon Foundation for Human Rights](#), C4JR, and survivors in Iraq for their contributions during a study visit to Iraqi Kurdistan in June. Read the report in full here: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/213/72/pdf/n2421372.pdf>. Listen to C4JR's More Than Ink on Paper podcast episode with Dr Edwards or read the full transcript of the conversation here: <https://c4jr.org/2606202429346>.

- To mark the tenth anniversary of the Yazidi genocide, Yazidi civil society organized a commemoration at the Yazidi Genocide Memorial in Solagh, Sinjar, to honor the victims and reaffirm their commitment to justice. At the event, they issued demands to the Iraqi government and the international community. These include prosecuting ISIS terrorists, rebuilding Yazidi areas, compensating survivors, and fully implementing the Yazidi Survivors' Law. They also called for legal reforms to prevent future
- atrocities, educational efforts to counter extremism, transforming Sinjar into a province, and ensuring the safe return of displaced persons. Additional demands included fair employment opportunities for Yazidis, exhumation of mass graves, and legal updates to prosecute genocide and crimes against humanity. Read the full list of demands here: <https://www.nadiasinitiative.org/news/yazidi-civil-society-statement-on-10th-anniversary-of-yazidi-genocide>.
- On the tenth anniversary of the Yazidi genocide, C4JR's Rehabilitation Working Group issued a statement underscoring the urgent need to implement the comprehensive, state-sponsored rehabilitation system envisioned under the YSL. Establishing a sustainable, quality rehabilitation system providing comprehensive mental health care is required to assist survivors in rebuilding their lives. Read the full statement here: <https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Rehabilitation-Statement-EN.pdf>.



Yazidi Genocide Memorial, Solagh, Sinjar. Photo credit: Nadia's Initiative

- To promote ethical reporting by journalists and NGOs, C4JR and the Jiyon Foundation for Human Rights have released the **Ethical Engagement Toolkit**, drafted by human rights lawyer Sherizaan Minwalla, founder of Taboo LLC, and consultant with the Jiyon Foundation. The toolkit, developed with contributions from Yusra Al-Kailani, Resilience

Programming Trainer at the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), addresses key issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and cultural sensitivity. It also offers practical, adaptable resources designed for various contexts. Access the toolkit here: <https://c4jr.org/2907202429430>



- In July, C4JR and the Jiyon Foundation for Human Rights jointly submitted their report to the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), focusing on justice and reparations for survivors of the ISIL conflict in Iraq. The submission addresses critical issues such as limited access to reparations under the YSL, the lack of transparency in eligibility and appeals processes, inadequate implementation

of rehabilitation and restitution measures, and insufficient accountability for ISIL crimes. Read the submission in full here: <https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/C4JR-UPR-Submission-Justice-and-Reparations-for-Survivors-of-ISIL-Conflict-in-Iraq.pdf>.

## Accountability Efforts

- On September 17, in response to the conclusion of UNITAD's mandate in Iraq, C4JR's Criminal Justice Working Group issued a statement emphasizing the importance of building on UNITAD's foundational work for future justice and accountability. The statement asks the Iraqi government to prioritize the passage of legislation that incorporates international crimes into domestic law, which would enable the prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity within Iraq, and the establishment of a robust witness protection program to safeguard the rights and security of those who testify. Read the full statement here: <https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Statement-on-conclusion-of-UNITADs-mandate-English-1.pdf>. For more detailed C4JR recommendations and analysis, please refer to C4JR's Position Paper on an ISIL Accountability Mechanism in Iraq here: <https://www.justice-iraq.com/>.
- In recent months, UNITAD has released several key reports documenting the international crimes committed by ISIL against various communities in Iraq. In September, UNITAD published a report titled "The ISIL Attack on Sinjar in August 2014 and Subsequent Acts Committed Against the Yazidi Community in Iraq," which concludes that ISIL's actions likely constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The full report can be accessed here: [https://www.unitad.un.org/sites/www.unitad.un.org/files/sinjar\\_brief\\_public\\_updated\\_0.pdf](https://www.unitad.un.org/sites/www.unitad.un.org/files/sinjar_brief_public_updated_0.pdf). Additionally, UNITAD released a factual and legal assessment of ISIL's crimes against the Christian community, suggesting that ISIL's actions may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The full report is available here: [https://www.unitad.un.org/sites/www.unitad.un.org/files/case\\_assessment\\_report\\_christians\\_summary\\_for\\_publication\\_final\\_withcover\\_eng2\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.unitad.un.org/sites/www.unitad.un.org/files/case_assessment_report_christians_summary_for_publication_final_withcover_eng2_reduced.pdf). In August, UNITAD also published a report analyzing sexual and gender-based crimes, as well as crimes affecting children, committed by ISIL against the Shi'a Turkmen community. The report finds reasonable grounds to believe these crimes committed by ISIL may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The full report can be found here: [https://www.unitad.un.org/sites/www.unitad.un.org/files/shia\\_turkmen\\_sgbc\\_caac\\_public\\_en.pdf](https://www.unitad.un.org/sites/www.unitad.un.org/files/shia_turkmen_sgbc_caac_public_en.pdf).

- The Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence (CIGE) has released its progress report for 2014-2024. According to the report, CIGE has collected over 2,902 victim statements, registered 37,876 documents in its evidence management system, and issued 1,308 official support letters affirming applicants' eligibility for the YSL. Read the full report here: <https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/CIGE-ENG-PR-Digital-Aug-14.pdf>.

## Challenges

Over the past year, C4JR's YSL newsletter has sought to highlight specific challenges faced by survivors or stakeholders involved in implementing the YSL. This issue presents an overview of the challenges previously covered and their current status.

The requirement for YSL applicants to file a **criminal complaint** and submit investigation documents continues for YSL applicants, despite the requirement lacking a legal basis in the YSL or its Bylaws. This requirement burdens survivors by forcing them to travel to their place of origin, often in Ninewa, to provide statements at police stations and courts. This process can be time-consuming, expensive, and re-traumatizing for many, especially for those living abroad who cannot return to Iraq to fulfill this requirement.

In addition, the request for **intelligence documents**, known as biometrics, continues to contribute to bureaucratic hurdles facing YSL applicants. Though required to verify the information in an applicant's criminal complaint is accurate, applicants face difficulties during the process due to various factors, such as the passage of time since the events, changes in local leadership, and ongoing tribal or sectarian tensions. These issues complicate the intelligence services' ability to confirm information, resulting in incomplete biometrics and delayed applications. C4JR advocates for a review of the current mechanisms to alleviate these burdens, such as adopting alternative methods for corroborating criminal complaints and aligning the process with international best practices to enhance accessibility, fairness, and sensitivity for all survivors. For more details on this challenge, see our YSL newsletter issue #7: [https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/C4JR-NL\\_7ENG.pdf](https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/C4JR-NL_7ENG.pdf).

C4JR became aware earlier this year of new **evidentiary thresholds** being requested by the YSL Committee that re-

quire applicants to provide corroborating testimonies from two individuals who were present with the applicant at the time of the crime and/or who have received reparations through the YSL. This high burden of proof comes with the risk of re-traumatization for the applicant and eyewitnesses and conflicts with international best practices, which suggest using a presumption of truth for conflict-related sexual violence cases. C4JR calls for clarity and standardization in these requirements to ensure fairness and transparency for all applicants. For more information about this specific challenge, see our YSL newsletter issue #6: [https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/C4JR-NL\\_6ENG.pdf](https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/C4JR-NL_6ENG.pdf).

An outstanding challenge concerns the YSL **appeals process** and the need for clearer, written communication regarding decisions on initial YSL applications and appeals. Applicants whose cases were rejected by the Committee informed C4JR that they needed to know why the Committee denied their applications, making it difficult to appeal their cases. After an appeal to the Committee is rejected, the applicant's last resort is to appeal the decision before the Court of First Instance. The continued absence of written rejection letters with specific reasons impacts applicants' ability to meet this strict 30-day appeal deadline. To address this, C4JR recommends that the Directorate provide detailed, dated rejection letters and clear information about the appeals process. This would help applicants understand their rejection and appeal their case effectively. C4JR also stresses the need for a survivor-centered, trauma-informed approach in communicating decisions to ensure applicants' rights are protected. See YSL newsletter issue #4 for more information about appeals process challenges: [https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/C4JR-NL\\_4ENG.pdf](https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/C4JR-NL_4ENG.pdf).

The YSL envisages **rehabilitation** as a form of reparation for survivors of the ISIL conflict, and despite progress made in establishing a provisional MHPSS referral system, more effort is needed to adequately address the rehabilitation needs of ISIL survivors. While the GDSA has initiated the strategic planning of a specialized psychological and psychiatric facility for YSL beneficiaries in collaboration with the Iraqi and Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions, updated information on the progress and timeline for establishment is currently unavailable. While these efforts by the GDSA are commendable, the current services provided by NGOs and international organizations are uncoordinated, insufficient, and heavily dependent on external funding, making them unsustainable. Read more about rehabilitation as a reparative measure in YSL newsletter issue #2: [https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/C4JR-NL\\_2ENG.pdf](https://c4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/C4JR-NL_2ENG.pdf).

While the Directorate has made progress in addressing the reparations needs of ISIL survivors, significant challenges remain. C4JR calls for measures to ease these burdens, adopt survivor-centered approaches while doing so, and align processes with international best practices to ensure fairness and accessibility for all survivors.

## Coming Up in the Newsletter

C4JR will continue to publish quarterly newsletters focused on empirical research, promoting good practices, sharing success stories, and highlighting ongoing challenges in the implementation of 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:**

- Make an appointment with the Directorate in their Sinjar or Mosul offices and visit 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) ;
- Fill 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;
- Apply 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>

## Get To Know C4JR Members

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

### Emma Human Development Organization



Emma is a non-profit, non-political, or sectarian humanitarian organization that provides rehabilitation services and development assistance to communities in the Kurdistan region, particularly supporting women and girls to minimize their suffering. Emma coordinates with government institutions, civil society organizations, and all parties working in gender equality, education, legislation, health, and mental health, in Erbil and Duhok. Emma organization supports survivors by providing:

- Legal services including legal counseling and requesting compensation for survivors such as supporting the obtaining of investigation papers, visits to the General Directorate of Survivors Affairs, and obtaining a unified national card until the completion of all procedures and obtaining reparations;

- Psychological and legal awareness services include providing professional and educational courses and legal and psychological seminars for survivors in the organization's centers located in Erbil, Sheikhan, and Dohuk governorates and IDP camps in the Duhok region;
- Psychological services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in the organization's centers in the aforementioned governorates.

Survivors can contact psychological counselors and lawyers in all of Emma's centers by calling the numbers below or visiting our centers in person.

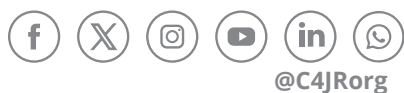
Sheikhan Women's Center, Duhok Governorate:  
+964 751 536 8532

Hawkari Women's Center, Erbil:  
+964 751 638 0440

## 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](http://www.c4jr.org) for more information.



C4JR updates  
WhatsApp group



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