

MORE THAN "INK ON PAPER"

Third Yazidi Survivors' Law Monitoring Report

* Merely "ink on paper" was the term used by some survivors of ISIL crimes to voice their doubts about the government's commitment to deliver long-awaited reparations guaranteed under the Yazidi [Female] Survivors Law (YSL).

2025



The historic Al-Hadba Minaret in Mosul has reopened after a major renovation led by UNESCO. The leaning minaret of Al-Nuri Mosque stood over the many narrow streets of Mosul's Old City for almost 850 years before ISIS destroyed it. Now, it stands again as a symbol of history and a sign that the city of Mosul is strong and its spirit remains unbroken.

PHOTO © Aymen Al-Ameri / The National



Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights is a charitable organization supporting survivors of human rights violations, defending fundamental freedoms, and promoting democratic values throughout the world. In addition to human rights awareness raising and advocacy, Jiyan Foundation provides, mental health and medical treatment as well as other support services to survivors of trauma, terror, domestic violence and human rights violations throughout Kurdistan-Iraq, Iraq, and Syria.

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Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) is an alliance of Iraqi 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 encourage Iraqi authorities to meet their obligation to provide reparations.

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Disclaimer

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ACRONYMS

C4JR	Coalition for Just Reparations
СоМ	Council of Ministers
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence
CSO(s)	Civil society organization(s)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Co
FGO	Farida Global Organization
GDSA	General Directorate for Surviv
Gol	Government of Iraq
GSF	Global Survivors Fund
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Commi
ICHHR	International Centre for Healt
ICMP	International Commission on I
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
INTERPOL	The International Criminal Pol
IOM	International Organization for
ISIL	The self-declared Islamic State
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Governme
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MGD	Mass Graves Directorate
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psycho-Soc
MLD	Medico-Legal Directorate
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
МоН	Ministry of Health
MoMD	Ministry of Migration and Disp
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social A
NGO(s)	Non-profit organization(s)
RFLA	Reconstruction Fund for Liber
SVN	Survivors' Voices Network
UN	United Nations
UNITAD	United Nations Investigative Te
	Committed by Da'esh/ISIL
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-Gen
UNSC	United Nations Security Cound
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
YSL	Yazidi [Female] Survivors' Law
YSN	Yazidi Survivors' Network

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The implementation of the Yazidi Survivors' Law and uneven implementation of rehabilitation and (YSL) has been a pivotal step in addressing the atrocities committed against Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, and Christian survivors of genocide and crimes against humanity. Since its passage, the transparency, and insufficient rehabilitation Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR), an alliance of Iraqi non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocating for comprehensive reparations for survivors of ISIL atrocity crimes in Iraq, has actively monitored its implementation through evidencebased reports and bi-monthly newsletters. This third annual report provides an overview of the YSL implementation efforts over the past year, highlighting progress, challenges, and ongoing gaps in the reparations process.

While the YSL implementation efforts have facilitated access to compensation, land restitution, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services for survivors, challenges remain in ensuring the law's full and effective implementation. These challenges include bureaucratic obstacles, discrepancies in access to reparations, and significant gaps in the provision of employment, education, and rehabilitation services.

This report offers an overview of key developments in implementing the YSL and broader transitional justice efforts in Iraq. Notable strides were made in facilitating access to the YSL application process for survivors living abroad; however, systemic issues persist across the YSL process. Challenges such as a lack of transparency in eligibility criteria

restitution measures continue to hinder progress. As a result, survivors face persistent barriers to accessing reparations, with delays, inadequate measures exacerbating their hardships.

The formation of the Supreme Committee for the Search for Kidnapped Persons represents a significant step forward in the efforts to account for the thousands of victims still missing following the ISIL genocide. This initiative offers a glimmer of hope to families desperately seeking information on missing loved ones, presenting the possibility of accountability and closure.

However, the premature conclusion of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) mandate has created a gap in the pursuit of justice, particularly in light of challenges related to utilizing its vast body of evidence both within Iraq and internationally. Iraq's failure to integrate international crimes into domestic law remains a critical barrier, obstructing the prosecution of ISIL perpetrators for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The tenth anniversary of the ISIL genocide served as a stark reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by survivors but continued collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders are essential to fulfill the promises of the YSL and ensure lasting justice for survivors of ISIL crimes in Iraq.

A group of Yazidi girls in Lalish PHOTO © Bilind Tahir/ Rudaw



I. AN OVERVIEW OF YSL IMPLEMENTATION DEVELOPMENTS

This report examines the advancements made by the GDSA over the past year and presents the current status of implementation for each benefit outlined in the YSL. It builds upon the relevant work of a range of civil society actors, international organizations, experts, human rights activists, and state officials, who play a role in supporting the YSL's implementation. It also complements C4JR's previous two annual reports, *More than "Ink on* Paper": Taking Stock Two Years After the Adoption of the Yazidi [Female] Survivors' Law which has been published yearly on March 1, since 2023, to mark the anniversary of passing the YSL.¹ Since July 2023, the C4JR has worked in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to produce, publish, and disseminate the bi-monthly YSL *Newsletter* in four languages. The newsletter aims to meet the need for reliable up-to-date information on the YSL application and implementation process. To date, C4JR has, in collaboration with IOM Iraq, published nine newsletters.² These efforts aim to highlight the positive impacts made by reparation efforts while also drawing attention to the prevailing challenges that hinder the delivery of benefits in a trauma-informed and survivor-centered manner. By documenting both progress and obstacles, this report seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the GDSA's efforts in implementing the YSL and offer actionable recommendations for improving the reparations process. It underscores the importance of sustained collaboration among government institutions, civil society, and international partners to ensure that survivors receive the justice and support they are entitled to.

GDSA Outreach, Awareness Raising, and Capacity Building

Over the past year, the GDSA has conducted numerous outreach initiatives and consultation sessions with communities eligible for YSL benefits. Particular attention was given to the search for missing persons in coordination with various Government of Iraq (GoI) departments and international agencies. In April 2024, the GDSA, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), held consultations with families of victims and missing persons. These sessions addressed issues such as the documentation of missing persons and mass graves, compensation procedures, and challenges faced by affected families.³ GDSA Director General Sarab Elias highlighted the efforts of the Supreme Committee for the Search for Kidnapped Persons established in February 2024 to uncover the fate of missing persons.⁴ To ensure ongoing engagement, the GDSA initiated the formation of a group of victims' families tasked with following up on the consultation outcomes.⁵

On December 14, 2024, C4JR member Farida Global Organization (FGO) organized a conference titled *The Yazidi Genocide: A Decade of Searching for the Missing* in honor of International Human Rights Day.⁶ The event featured speakers including GDSA Director General, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Iraq for Human Rights Dr. Zidan Khalaf, Director General of the Directorate of Yazidi Affairs Saud Misto, and Deputy Director of the Department of Protection of Mass Graves and Missing Persons Amer Jabbar. Civil



society members, survivors, and victims' families also participated. The conference provided a platform for in-depth discussions on the search for missing persons. It concluded with a roundtable session that fostered dialogue between government representatives, civil society, and survivors.

From April 25 to May 4, 2024, the GDSA participated in a study trip organized by IOM to Jordan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to exchange best practices for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) recovery and reintegration.¹¹ The delegation–comprised of the Prime Minister's Advisor for Human Rights, the GDSA Director General, the Head of the Women Empowerment Department in the Ministry of Health, the National Advisor for Mental Health, and a Ministry of Finance representative– began in Amman, Jordan, with a two-day exchange

A Yazidi girl who was kidnapped has returned to her family after 10 years. PHOTO © Naif Ramazan/ Rudaw at the Center for Victims of Torture.¹² Following this, the delegation visited the Panzi Foundation and Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, DRC, learning about the Panzi model¹³ of holistic care that integrates medical, psychological, legal, and socioeconomic support.

In August 2024, the GDSA Director-General participated in an **awareness-raising** seminar entitled The Crimes of the Terrorist Organization ISIS Against the Yazidis and Other Components-Turkmen, Shabak, and Christians—as Crimes of Genocide and *Crimes Against Humanity*.¹⁴ The event, hosted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Fuad Hussein, included survivors, diplomatic missions, and other key stakeholders. The seminar sought to shed light on ISIL crimes perpetrated against components and stress the continued need for collaboration between the GDSA and government ministries to provide wide-ranging support and rehabilitation to survivors.

Director General Sarab Elias represented the GDSA on the international stage at multiple high-profile events. In April 2024, she joined a panel titled The End of Silence? Creating Supporting Systems for Survivors at the Women, Peace, and Security Forum in Prishtina, Kosovo, alongside reparation and justice experts, chaired by Dr. Denis Mukwege.¹⁵ In October 2024, Sarab Elias attended the 15th-anniversary commemoration of the United Nations mandate on sexual violence in conflict at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York. During her speech, she highlighted Iraq's efforts to support survivors through the YSL and underscored the importance of international solidarity in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.¹⁶

The GDSA also focused on **capacity building** during the year. In November 2024, it held an intensive training workshop supported by IOM, covering legal and administrative skills, combating financial corruption, and survivor-centered approaches to

service delivery.¹⁷ FGO also contributed by providing determinations of who qualifies as eligible and the training based on C4JR's ethical engagement toolkit.¹⁸ evidentiary requirements they must meet, making However, the GDSA continued to face significant it difficult for YSL applicants to successfully apply staffing challenges due to a hiring freeze imposed and appeal rejected cases. One key issue concerns under Law No. 13 of 2023, the "General Budget" of the law's coverage of women and girls (fatāh) who the Federal Republic of Iraq (2023-2025).¹⁹ As a result, were subjected to sexual violence.²⁰ The YSL does not many GDSA staff have been seconded from other define "girl" nor the age parameters of this category government departments to support its operations. but follows those outlined in the Juveniles' Law No. These constraints underscore the critical importance 11 of 1962 which makes a distinction between "child" of the GDSA's capacity-building efforts, particularly and "youth."²¹ Under this law, "youth"—including in fostering ethical standards to ensure that survivor those referred to as fatāh—are individuals between support remains trauma-informed and survivorthe ages of 15 and 18. This lack of clarity in definition, centered. compounded by translation and language issues, has led to misinterpretations. As a result, some girls who experienced sexual violence were subjected to an **YSL Eligibility** intrusive investigation process, faced public shaming, and were ultimately denied eligibility under the YSL.

Four years into the implementation of the YSL, transparency remains lacking in how the GDSA and YSL Committee interpret eligibility requirements. The ambiguity has resulted in inconsistent



The lack of clarity surrounding the crimes or violations covered by the YSL has also caused challenges for YSL applicants.²² Under the YSL, survivors of kidnappings of the listed crimes, including sexual slavery, human trafficking, family separation, forced conversion, The development of video conferencing for survivors forced marriage, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, abroad to facilitate the criminal investigation or physical and psychological harm. However, YSL applicants who faced different fact patterns distinct from kidnapping during ISIL persecution, and experienced one of the severe violations of sexual violence listed while in detention *may* be eligible. This distinction sets an unfair precedent, as the law should provide reparations to all survivors of the listed crimes, regardless of the specific circumstances in which the violations occurred.²³

YSL Application Process

In terms of improving access to the YSL application process, in November 2024, the GDSA announced a key development to facilitate applications for survivors living abroad. YSL applicants in France and Germany are now able to submit their testimony remotely via video conferencing hosted at Iraqi diplomatic missions in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Paris.²⁴ This initiative was enabled through GDSA's collaboration with the Supreme Judicial Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and extensive engagement with relevant embassies. To guide applicants, the GDSA's Sinjar Branch Director, Shihab Ahmed Samir, released an instructional video in Kurmancî, which explains the registration and appointment process.²⁵ Applicants can schedule an appointment via the GDSA's Facebook page or phone. Supporting these efforts, FGO's Community Public Relations team published an informational video,²⁶ while Yazda, in collaboration with Taboo LLC.,²⁷ disseminated details on the process through their social media channels.

YSL Application Verification

According to the GDSA's YSL brochure, applicants must submit two essential forms of documentation: a government-issued ID and evidence that they have initiated a criminal investigation against ISIL.²⁸ Despite advocacy efforts, the requirement for applicants to file a criminal complaint and submit investigation documents remains mandatory, even though it lacks a legal basis in the YSL or its bylaws

are eligible provided they also experienced at least one and contradicts international best practices for evidentiary requirements in reparation programs.²⁹ requirement marks a significant step in reducing barriers for some survivors to access their right to reparation and demonstrates the GDSA's ability to coordinate effectively. However, several challenges related to YSL application verification remain unresolved. It is unclear how outstanding challenges affecting YSL applicants in Iraq will affect applicants applying from abroad, namely challenges surrounding YSL Committee requests for biometric verification and corroborating testimonies.

> After submitting a YSL application, the YSL Committee requests applicants to provide intelligence documents and undergo biometric verification. Applicants may face significant bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining this clearance, which delays the completion of their YSL applications and restricts their access to reparations.³⁰ The process first involves presenting in person or through legal representation at the intelligence services (istikhbārāt) to initiate security clearance.³¹ Then intelligence services conduct a field assessment (mash maydanī) to verify the claims given with a mukhtar and/or particular members of the wider community, after which the mukhtar submits a letter verified at a police station confirming the claims made by the YSL applicant. Survivors consulted by C4JR report challenges in supporting the verification of their claims due to the passage of time since the events, changes in mukhtar leadership, the absence of a mukhtar from the area during the relevant period, and local tribal or sectarian tensions. Moreover, the concealing of victimhood, particularly in the case of CRSV, further complicates the verification process. Survivors are reluctant to disclose their experiences due to the associated stigma and shame rendering the mukhtar unable to provide an official confirmation of a survivor's experience. This not only delays the YSL application process but also further marginalizes survivors who may be already burdened by trauma and societal exclusion.

The GDSA's YSL brochure lists optional documents that applicants may submit if available, including:

• Testimonies from three witnesses among YSL beneficiaries that are certified by a notary.

- Reports from reputable international organizations supporting survivors.
- Official letters from security services confirming escape.
- Official letters from government departments or institutions verifying rescue.

The brochure further notes that the YSL Committee may request an interview with an applicant in cases of insufficient evidence, inconsistencies in the application, or if the applicant's captivity lasted less than one month.³² However, recent developments underscore the need for clarity regarding evidentiary requirements. In May 2024, C4JR reported new demands from the YSL Committee, including the need for corroborating testimonies from two YSL beneficiaries who witnessed the crime and/ or received reparations.³³ Applicants were further required to obtain court documents verifying these testimonies, placing an onerous burden on survivors who have already filed criminal complaints.

This heightened standard of proof-requiring better inform applicants and the civil society witnesses to attest to grave human rights violations organizations (CSOs) supporting them, allowing for such as mass killings and abductions-risks more targeted efforts to address eligibility criteria or retraumatizing both applicants and evewitnesses rectify gaps in application files. and remains inconsistent with best practices for reparations programs. While presented as optional, While the YSL and its bylaws outline the basic these evidentiary requirements are effectively framework for the appeals process, further measures being made mandatory, further restricting access to are needed to ensure transparency and accessibility. reparations. Moreover, such discretionary demands An appeals process information leaflet should be from the YSL Committee disproportionately impact created that clearly explains the steps available to survivors. Female applicants face heightened risks applicants whose claims were rejected as well as the of retraumatization, breaches of confidentiality, contact information of organizations able to offer free-of-charge legal aid. This leaflet should be userand stigmatization, while male applicants struggle to disclose experiences of military training and friendly, available in the languages most commonly forced combat due to fears of prosecution. These understood by survivors, and widely disseminated. practices undermine survivor-centered approaches Moreover, to ensure accessibility, the GDSA should that emphasize protecting applicants and ensuring provide this leaflet directly to applicants alongside efficient, accessible, and trauma-informed justice and written rejection letters. Additional formats, such as video or audio guides, could further enhance reparations. accessibility for survivors facing literacy barriers or other challenges.

YSL Appeals Process

The appeals process under the YSL presents a significant challenge for applicants, particularly due to the lack of clear and written communication regarding

decisions on initial applications and appeals.³⁴ Survivors whose applications are rejected by the • Documents issued by ISIL concerning the applicant. YSL Committee frequently report that they are not informed of the specific reasons for their rejection, leaving them unable to address deficiencies or strengthen their case for appeal within the strict 30day deadline for the first appeal. If the first appeal to the YSL Committee is rejected, applicants have one final recourse: filing an appeal with the Court of First Instance. What concerns the latter, as YSL does not specify any deadline for filing such an appeal, different interpretations of the applicable deadline within which the appeal is to be submitted contribute to the legal uncertainty and, thus, further complicate the appeal process.

> To address this issue, C4JR has consistently advocated for the YSL Committee to adopt a standardized practice of issuing formal decision letters to applicants. These letters should include clear, specific grounds for rejection, the applicable deadlines within which appeals must be filed, and should be issued routinely. Such measures would



II. GDSA'S DELIVERY OF YSL BENEFITS, SERVICES, AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS

The YSL offers individual material reparations to survivors of ISIL crimes from the four recognized communities–Yazidi, Shabak, Turkmen, and Monthly compensation payments continue to be the Christian–with a particular emphasis on women and girls who endured CRSV, as well as survivors of mass the GoI has made significant progress in processing killings and Yazidi children abducted by ISIL. The reparations include monthly financial payments, a time to YSL beneficiaries, even releasing reparation plot of land accompanied by a government loan or a free housing unit, access to medical care and MHPSS services, and opportunities to resume education and employment. These individual reparative measures the release of reparation payments of IQD 800,000 are complemented by broader symbolic actions aimed at acknowledging ISIL atrocities and preventing ISIL covered by the YSL.³⁸ This payment amount their recurrence, constituting a more comprehensive and holistic approach to reparations under the YSL.³⁵ Updates on reparations rollouts and the latest statistics on YSL applications are published via the YSL beneficiaries located outside Irag are required to GDSA's Facebook page.³⁶

Monthly Compensation

most successful aspects of YSL implementation, and applications and distributing reparation payments on payments before their due date, foreseeing disruptions due to public holidays.³⁷ The MoLSA and GDSA announced as of the end of January 2025, (or approximately US \$600) to 2,216 survivors of constitutes the guaranteed minimum amount for financial payments.³⁹

provide bayan sanawi or an annual statement each year at the nearest Iragi consulate or embassy or by visiting Iraq, as proof of life to the GDSA in order to maintain their entitlement to YSL benefits.

In July 2024, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq announced the launch of a financial assistance program aimed at supporting over 3,000 women and girl survivors of ISIL.⁴⁰ The program is designed to improve the financial situation of survivors, with a monthly payment of 150,000 IQD (US \$100) available to all survivors—both male and female—whose names are registered with the Kidnapped Yazidi Rescue Office, including those both inside and outside Iraq. Payments are distributed in coordination with the Lalish Cultural and Social Center in Shaira, Khanke, Shekhan, and Derabun.⁴¹ Survivors residing in Sinjar can receive two payments in one visit to the Derabun center due to the distance they must travel.

Education

The GDSA has taken steps to facilitate survivors' resumption of education, a crucial component of their reparations and recovery, as mandated under the YSL. In November 2024, the GDSA in collaboration with the Sinjar Education Directorate, completed procedures to facilitate the return of 16 survivors to school, in coordination with the General Directorate of Nineveh Education.⁴²

The Global Survivors Fund (GSF) conducted important research on Access to Education as a Form of Reparation for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Survivors in Iraq, which explores the barriers survivors face when seeking to resume their education. The report highlights systemic challenges such as a lack of appropriate solutions, limited educational infrastructure, and insufficient support for survivors' unique needs.⁴³ The research was prepared jointly by GSF and a task force that included key organizations such as the Survivors' Voices Network (SVN), the Yazidi Survivors Network (YSN), the Farida Global Organization (FGO), Yazda, and the NEEM Foundation. Requests for a survivorcentered education model also featured prominently in the consultations Jivan Foundation for Human Rights conducted with male survivors.⁴⁴ This is to be done by embedding education support within a broader holistic rehabilitation model established to give effect to the YSL.

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Education's guidelines, students absent for two or more years are required to attend evening school and those missing four years of schooling face restrictions on enrolling in both morning and evening schools.⁴⁵ Furthermore, strict age restrictions are imposed on primary and secondary education, barring enrollment of students who exceed the set age limits.⁴⁶ While the YSL provides exemptions for survivors,⁴⁷ navigating the bureaucratic process remains a significant challenge. The GSF's report underscores that many survivors encounter repeated failures when attempting to reintegrate into the education system, and some face isolation or academic struggles, resulting in dropping out.⁴⁸ Additionally, the law's financial compensation provisions create a disincentive for some survivors to pursue education, as they cannot simultaneously receive compensation and government employment benefits.

In July 2024, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) introduced a series of progressive measures to support ISIL survivors' return to education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).⁴⁹ These measures, outlined by Minister of Education Alan Hama Saeed, include exemptions from age requirements and educational prerequisites for survivors who completed 9th grade before captivity. The new



any governmental college and receive free private education for five academic years. These provisions were officially implemented for the 2024-2025 academic year.

C4JR continues to advocate for coordinated efforts between the Federal Government of Irag and the Kurdistan Region to ensure that survivors are not burdened by conflicting educational reparation measures and to streamline their access to necessary educational pathways.

Employment

Employment is framed as a key mechanism of restitution and rehabilitation under the YSL and the GDSA is tasked with facilitating employment opportunities and securing public-sector jobs to help survivors achieve economic and social well-being.⁵⁰ In May 2024, the GDSA launched its Empowerment Initiative in coordination with the Ministry of Culture.⁵¹ This initiative provides vocational training for YSL beneficiaries in a variety of professions, including

regulations also allow survivors to pursue studies in soap making, candle making, glass drawing, and phone repair. To further support survivors' economic independence, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs announced plans to allocate loans to participants of this initiative, enabling them to launch incomegenerating projects.

> Consultations with YSL beneficiaries facilitated by C4JR members underscored the importance of promoting survivors' economic independence through comprehensive vocational training, skills development, business support, and access to job opportunities in both the public and private sectors.⁵² Survivors also highlighted the critical role NGOs could play by offering scholarships, training programs, and livelihood projects to empower them to achieve economic stability.

> Despite these promising steps, confusion persists regarding the compatibility of monthly YSL compensation payments with public-sector employment.⁵³Under current practices, survivors are forced to choose between retaining their compensation payments or accepting stable publicsector jobs, as they cannot receive both forms of

MORE THAN "INK ON PAPER": TAKING STOCK FOUR YEARS AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE YAZIDI [FEMALE] SURVIVORS LAW

support. This predicament undermines survivors' for internally displaced persons (IDPs) would enable dignity, autonomy, and reintegration efforts, while survivors to choose where land and housing benefits also creating unnecessary stress and jeopardizing are located as envisaged by the Inter-Agency Standing their health and recovery. Fears of potential legal Committee (IASC).⁵⁷ Many survivors have expressed repercussions for inadvertently receiving dual state ongoing security concerns and inadequate livelihood salaries further exacerbate survivors' anxieties. prospects in their areas of origin, making a return unviable for a dignified life.⁵⁸

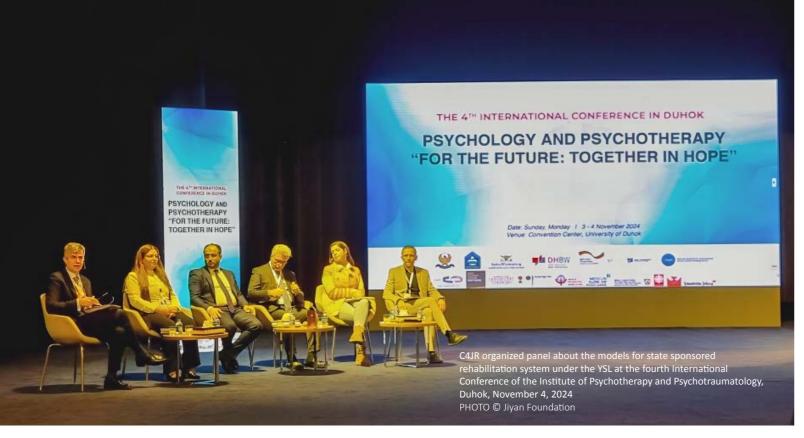
Requiring survivors to choose between compensation and public-sector employment hinders their ability In January 2024, the Gol's Council of Ministers (CoM) to pursue sustainable, long-term life plans. The took additional steps by approving the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) mechanism for Government of Iraq (GoI) should create an exception for YSL beneficiaries, Allowing them to receive both incentivizing IDP returns.⁵⁹ Under this plan, families compensation payments and public-sector salaries registered in the MoMD database were offered simultaneously. A precedent for this exists under 4,000,000 IQD (approximately US \$3,056) to return the Martyrs Foundation Law No. 2 of 2016, which from IDP camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) explicitly permits dual state salaries under Article to their Sinjar homeland. This initiative was part of 11.2. Applying a similar provision to YSL beneficiaries the CoM's Decision No. 24007, which set June 30, would uphold their rights and better align with 2024, as the deadline for closing all 22 camps in survivor-centered reparative practices.54 the KRI. However, significant concerns were raised, particularly among Yazidi survivors, who felt that the conditions in Sinjar were not conducive to a safe and Land & Housing dignified return due to the lack of essential services and the slow pace of reconstruction.⁶⁰ As of January The implementation of the YSL has taken an important 2025, the camps in the KRI remain open, reflecting step forward in addressing historic land and housing the challenges of implementing this policy.

rights issues for Yazidi survivors in particular.⁵⁵ By recognizing the right to land and housing, the YSL Decision No. 24007 also mandated reconstruction acknowledges the long-term stability and security efforts in Sinjar and Nineweh, instructing the Sinjar needs of survivors, many of whom lost their homes and Nineweh Plain Reconstruction Fund and the during the ISIL conflict. In May 2024, the GDSA Reconstruction Fund for Liberated Areas (RFLA) initiated the distribution of residential land plots to to assign two plots of land in Sinjar and Mosul YSL beneficiaries.⁵⁶ A lottery, held at the Nineweh districts for the construction of low-cost homes for Municipalities Directorate, allocated 262 residential IDPs approved to return.⁶¹ The RFLA was further plots: 250 in the Sinjar District and 12 in the Tal Afar instructed to increase its budget allocation for Sinjar District. This progress represents a critical aspect of to accelerate reconstruction.⁶² Additionally, the reparations, offering survivors a tangible means to Ministry of Finance was directed to allocate 50 billion rebuild their lives and regain a sense of ownership. IQD for compensation to the injured and 250 billion On the other hand, no progress has been reported IQD for property compensation.⁶³ A crisis team, led on granting real estate loans or free housing units to by the Prime Minister's Human Rights Advisor, was be built on the respective land plots as envisaged by established to address Sinjar's needs, with a detailed the YSL. report submitted to the Higher Committee for the Administration of Sinjar.

To date, eligible survivors have only been able to exercise their land and housing rights under the YSL in their areas of origin. This approach limits survivors' ability to choose alternate locations for resettlement, even though the YSL does not explicitly restrict land and housing benefits to specific governorates. Ideally, a rights-based approach to durable solutions ⁴⁴ The YSL is a good law and it's amazing that it was established in such a short period of time. There are some points in the law that are a problem like survivors can't take both a government salary [and reparation payments], so survivors who are receiving monthly payments can't take a government job. This is a problem. Still, it's a good law and it would be amazing if they activate all of the points in the law. There are so many parts that are still weak, such as education. They tried to implement that point, but not many students have joined their education yet. For me, the most important is education, and then salaries."

Survivors presented an exhibition at the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Yazidi Genocide. Yazidi Genocide Memorial, Sinjar, August 3, 2024.

PHOTO © Noori Issa



Rehabilitation

While C4JR's previous annual report expressed hope for significant advancements this year in the establishment of rehabilitation centers, progress on this measure has been slow.⁶⁴ It has been confirmed that Rehabilitation Centers will be opened in Mosul and Sinjar.⁶⁵ However, the accessibility of these centers may not be ensured considering that many survivors and victim families remain displaced in the KRI. In addition, the city of Mosul, being a location where many survivors were transferred after their abduction to be trafficked and subjected to further violations, is, for many of them, inextricably linked with the brutalization they were forced to endure. Therefore, situating a rehabilitation center in this location comes at a risk of retraumatizing survivors.

Since March 2023, the GDSA has been coordinating with several local NGOs that provide MHPSS services to YSL beneficiaries via a referral mechanism to bridge the institutional gap in MHPSS service provision to survivors. However, the lack of sustained funding for the mechanism poses a significant risk to the continuity and effectiveness of long-term MHPSS support for YSL beneficiaries.

In January 2025, the GDSA began issuing healthcare cards to survivors covered by the YSL, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Nineweh Health Department.⁶⁶ These cards will allow survivors to access health services free of charge in all medical and health service providers under the Iragi Ministry of Health, including future centers established by the GDSA, thereby providing crucial support to their rehabilitation process. In addition, the GDSA has also facilitated the treatment of survivors outside Iraq, contributing to their recovery and well-being. C4JR and Jivan Foundation for Human Rights representatives participated in the 4th International Conference of the Institute of Psychotherapy and Psychotraumatology, with panelists including Professor Jan Ilhan Kizilhan, representatives from the GDSA, and Yusra al-Kailani from the Center for Victims of Torture. During the event, Dr. Bojan Gavrilovic suggested a holistic survivor-centered rehabilitation center model to be implemented by a consortium of different actors to facilitate ISIL Survivors' right to rehabilitation as stipulated under the YSL. This call aligns with C4JR's broader efforts to ensure effective implementation of the YSL, including the development of tools to monitor and evaluate rehabilitation measures.

In June 2024, C4JR launched a monitoring guide on the right to rehabilitation for ISIL survivors in Iraq.67 The guide titled *Right to Rehabilitation as Reparation* August 3, 2024, marked the tenth anniversary of the for Survivors of Grave Human Rights Violations: A Yazidi genocide. A commemorative event was held Guide to Using Human Rights Indicators to Monitor at the Yazidi Genocide Memorial in Solagh, Sinjar, Implementation and Realization of the Right to attended by thousands from the Yazidi community, Rehabilitation for Survivors of ISIL Crimes in Iraq is along with representatives from diplomatic missions, the result of extensive research and consultations led UN agencies, and the GDSA.⁷⁰ Leading up to the by International Centre for Health and Human Rights event, the Yazidi community formed an organizing (ICHHR) Professor Nimisha Patel, designed to help committee, consisting of over 50 local NGOs, monitor and enhance the implementation of the YSL, community leaders, survivors, and victims' families, to ensuring that survivors can access the rehabilitation collectively determine how to mark the anniversary.⁷¹ services they need.⁶⁸ The guide addresses the need for systematic monitoring and evaluation of the During the event, Yazidi CSOs issued demands to rehabilitation rights guaranteed to survivors of ISIL both the Iraqi government and the international community.72 These included the prosecution of atrocities, providing tools for assessing and ensuring the implementation of such rights as stipulated ISIL terrorists, rebuilding Yazidi areas, compensating under the YSL. The guide introduces a set of human survivors, and fully implementing the Yazidi rights indicators developed by the ICHHR and Survivors' Law. They also called for legal reforms tailored for the Iraqi context in collaboration with to prevent future atrocities, educational initiatives the Jiyan Foundation and was the result of extensive to counter extremism, the transformation of Sinjar into a province, and ensuring the safe return of stakeholder consultations conducted between June and December 2023. It is hoped that the indicators displaced persons. Additional demands included fair employment opportunities for Yazidis, exhumation will serve as benchmarks for assessing compliance with international standards on rehabilitation and of mass graves, and legal updates to facilitate the monitoring the effective implementation of the prosecution of genocide and crimes against humanity. YSL. During the launch, the Special Rapporteur on As per the YSL, the GoI marks August 3 as a national day Torture delivered a keynote address titled *Repairing* of remembrance on which commemorative activities the Irreparable: Remedies, Rehabilitation, and will be held.⁷³ In August 2024, the Prime Minister Reparations for Survivors, Families, and Communities directed that on this date each year, a minute of silence Impacted by Sexual Torture in Armed Conflict, is observed in all ministries and government bodies, outlining the impact of sexual forms of torture on in honor of the victims of the ISIL genocide beginning survivors and their communities.⁶⁹ at 10 AM.⁷⁴ This observance is complemented by seminars, events, and exhibitions aimed at raising



Memorialization

دەزگاى ژيان بۆمافەكانى مرۆق مۇسسە ژيان لىقوق الإنسان Iiyan Foundation for Human Pieter

DOBY /harfoundation

[The Yazidi Survivors] law is pioneering for this region...It is a very good step towards other legal rights, around the framework of torture, but also genocide and other atrocity crimes... I would say, throughout all of [the implementation] process, ensuring that survivors of ISIS crimes are not retraumatized; that this is survivor-led. I understand that there were lots of consultations with survivors in this law, but likewise, those consultations need to continue through the law's implementation... I've been really blown away by the level of commitment of the civil society actors that I've met, and the survivors' engagement in those organizations; being members of staff, being clients, [and] engaging in networks. I also think this kind of coordination that the NGOs and others have through the Coalition for Just Reparations... shows how many people and organizations are involved." **Dr. Alice Edwards**

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Dr. Alice Edwards delivers keynote remarks at the C4JR event in Erbil, June 12, 2024 PHOTO © Saber Saeed

genocide, and a yearly memorial service for victims of the Yazidi genocide and other components is sponsored by the Prime Minister's office.⁷⁵ Despite advocacy for this date to be designated an official national holiday and national day of commemoration throughout Iraq, the day remains a working day.⁷⁶

Despite the Yazidi Survivors' Law (YSL) stating that relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Culture, Baghdad Municipality, and other concerned agencies, shall construct "monuments, statues, and exhibitions" to immortalize the victims, government initiative on

awareness about the atrocities committed during the commemorative efforts has been slow to take off.⁷⁷ In contrast, in July 2024, the MoLSA and the GDSA, with the support of IOM, announced plans to establish miniature memorials at the sites of mass graves in the Sinjar and Tel Afar districts.⁷⁸ This initiative, which was largely driven by the GDSA and external partners, highlights the gap left by the designated government department's limited action in memorializing the genocide. As part of this initiative, the GDSA invited artists, sculptors, and other interested individuals to participate in a consultative meeting to present ideas and designs for the memorials. International agencies and civil society organizations have thus been filling this gap, working collaboratively with survivors and The GSF and Nadia's Initiative advanced communities to ensure that the memory of the memorialization efforts in Sinjar by inaugurating a victims is preserved, despite the lack of significant statue honoring women harmed by ISIL.⁷⁹ Co-created governmental support in this area. with survivors, this project marked the closure of GSF's interim reparations project, which provided In addition to government-led initiatives, this year saw interim reparations to 1,040 CRSV survivors.

other significant memorialization efforts achieved by civil society, international organizations, and international governments. These efforts included the unveiling of monuments, memorial services, and collaborative projects designed to honor the victims of the genocide and ensure their stories are not forgotten.

The [Yazidi Survivors'] Law is a great reparation legal framework, aiming to address and redress the harms suffered by survivors. It's a great example of what a reparation law should be ... What we have with the Yazidi Survivors' Law is a reparation law which, in my view, is quite good as a law. I have to congratulate the Iragi government for having the leadership and the initiative to pass so fast-probably the fastest reparations law to have been approved"

Clara Sandoval

Director of Programmes, Global Survivors' Fund

A Yazidi girl who was kidnapped has returned to her fa

PHOTO © Naif Ramazan/ Rudaw

Internationally, in July 2024, Nadia Murad joined survivors of CRSV at an event in Stuttgart, Germany, to unveil the *Mother and Justice* mobile memorial.⁸⁰ Inspired by the first Yazidi survivors to secure a conviction against an ISIL member in Germany, the memorial depicts a mother and her children bound by the scales of justice.⁸¹ The event was attended Baden-Württemberg's Minister-President by Winfried Kretschmann and Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Recognizing the need for a permanent memorial, the German parliament approved funding for a Yazidi genocide memorial in Germany. In late 2024, representatives from 26 Yazidi organizations convened to discuss its design and construction, marking a significant step toward preserving the memory of the genocide.⁸²

These ongoing efforts in memorialization, both within Iraq and internationally, represent a critical step in acknowledging the atrocities faced by minority communities and ensuring that their suffering is not forgotten.

Search for the Missing & **Excavations of Mass Graves**

The GDSA is mandated to collaborate with relevant authorities and victims' families to search for individuals abducted by ISIL whose fate remains unknown.⁸³ In February 2024, the MoLSA and GDSA launched an electronic registration form to systematically collect information about missing persons, marking a significant step in addressing this critical issue.⁸⁴ This initiative coincided with the establishment of a high-level committee within the GDSA, headed by the Prime Minister's Human Rights Advisor, dedicated to uncovering the fate of abductees, emphasizing a survivor-centered



approach by involving families of victims.⁸⁵ As of this writing, 679 names have been registered through the form.⁸⁶ The GDSA also initiated efforts to locate and repatriate the remains of victims situated in Syria, as required under Article 5.8 of the YSL, encouraging individuals with information about victims' remains to contact the agency via social media, providing details such as names, locations, and family contact information.87

To bolster these efforts, the GDSA, in collaboration with the Committee for the Search for the Kidnapped and the Government Communication Team in the Prime Minister's Office, launched a nationwide media campaign in September 2024.⁸⁸ This campaign aimed to raise public awareness and engagement in locating kidnapped individuals across Iraq. It featured mass text alerts sent to all governorates, posters, and the dissemination of information about the GDSA's dedicated hotline for submitting tips. Furthermore, the GDSA, MoLSA, and the Supreme Committee for the Search for Kidnapped Persons introduced a financial incentive program, offering monetary rewards for credible information leading to the liberation of abductees.⁸⁹

In addressing these initiatives, the GDSA and its partner agencies must consider factors such as the risk of retraumatization and socio-economic barriers survivors face during these processes, including interactions

with electronic systems and when providing DNA samples. The newly established committee should ensure consistent outreach, engagement, and consultation with CSOs and other actors involved in documenting the missing or conducting searches. Leveraging existing databases and fostering collaboration with experienced organizations will enhance these efforts and avoid the burden of overdocumentation often placed on survivors and victims' families.

Some progress has also been made in the direct rescue and return of survivors. In March 2024, the GDSA supervised the return of a Yazidi survivor from al-Hol camp in Syria, with support from the Prime Minister's Office, the National Intelligence Service, and other stakeholders.⁹⁰ Additional successes followed, including the return of two survivors in August 2024⁹¹ and the October rescue of a Yazidi survivor from a regional country.⁹² These operations, directed by the Prime Minister and coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underscore Iraq's commitment to addressing the issue of missing persons through multi-agency collaboration.

Despite these achievements, the challenges remain significant. The GDSA's initiatives, including the formation of a distinct committee to coordinate the search for the missing, nationwide campaigns, and rescue missions, are steps in the right direction.

However, the scale of the issue necessitates sustained and families, adequate resource allocation, and action, transparency, and ongoing engagement with adherence to international best practices are crucial survivors and their families to build trust and ensure to addressing the lasting impacts of ISIL's crimes and meaningful progress. achieving justice and closure for survivors.

In parallel, efforts to recover and identify victims from **Other Compensation Pathways** mass graves have advanced. In May 2024, the Martyrs Foundation initiated the exhumation of the Alo Antar under Iragi Law Well mass grave in Tel Afar's al-Ayadiya region.93 Overseen by the Prime Minister's Advisor for Human In November 2024, compensation payments under Rights, the process was conducted with the Medico-Law No. 20 began in Sinjar after years of delays, Legal Directorate (MLD), the Mass Graves Directorate which had previously hindered displaced Sinjaris' (MGD), and UNITAD's International Investigation return.⁹⁷ Law No. 20 provides compensation to Iraqis Team. With support from the International for damages caused by war operations, military Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), a national errors, and terrorism. This includes compensation campaign collected DNA reference samples to aid in for civilian victims or their families in cases of victim identification.⁹⁴ The exhumation, which lasted death, enforced disappearance, disability, injury, three months, resulted in the recovery of 158 bodies property damage, or disruptions to employment and and 39 body parts.⁹⁵ These remains were transferred education.⁹⁸ While this development, along with the to MLD facilities in Baghdad for identification. To MoMD grants, marks a step forward in rebuilding foster transparency, the Governor of Nineweh, Abdul homes and livelihoods, challenges remain. The Qadir al-Dakhil, held a press conference alongside Danish Refugee Council reported that the high cost of Zidan Khalaf, the Prime Minister's Human Rights construction materials has created barriers, with the Advisor, to explain the excavation process in the local community estimating that a basic two-room presence of victims' families and stakeholders.96 dwelling costs at least 10 million IQD (approximately USD \$7,500) to build⁹⁹—significantly more than the These initiatives underscore the importance of available financial support.

coordinated efforts to search for the missing and recover victims from mass graves. While progress has been made, continued engagement with survivors

III. DEVELOPMENTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE EFFORTS

ies hold a solemn funeral for the remains of Yazidi Genocid

ns, repatriated to Herdan cemetery, North Sinjar

Over the past year, the pursuit of justice for victims any international crime cases within Iraq.¹⁰² UNITAD, of ISIL atrocities has seen some advancements, particularly through third-country prosecutions. request,¹⁰⁴ was tasked with assisting the country However, these efforts are overshadowed by significant setbacks, including the conclusion of mandate included collecting and storing evidence to UNITAD's mandate without any domestic adjudication complement Iraqi national investigations or support of international crimes and the lack of legislation in prosecutions in third-party states. However, UNITAD Iraq to prosecute genocide, war crimes, and crimes faced significant obstacles, including a prohibition against humanity. These gaps highlight the persistent on sharing evidence with states that apply the death challenges in achieving justice within Iraq's legal framework. This section examines key developments criminal proceedings in Iraq.¹⁰⁵ in criminal justice efforts while underscoring the urgent need for domestic legal reform and sustainable mechanisms to address ISIL's atrocities.

The End of UNITAD's Mandate

UNITAD's mandate concluded on September 17, 2024, following a request made by Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein in September 2023 to extend it for one final year, with no possibility of renewal.¹⁰⁰ This decision was made without consulting survivors or civil society¹⁰¹ and ended without the adjudication of

established under UNSC Resolution 2379¹⁰³ at Iraq's in holding ISIL accountable for atrocity crimes. Its penalty, which hindered the use of evidence in

Over its seven-year tenure, UNITAD produced 10 comprehensive reports, focusing on crimes against specific Iraqi communities-Yazidi, Christian, and Turkmen-to particular atrocity sites, such as Camp Speicher, Badush Central Prison, and locations in Tikrit.¹⁰⁶ A notable report also detailed sexual violence against women and girls perpetrated by ISIL.¹⁰⁷ Despite accumulating nearly 52 terabytes of data, UNITAD supported only 15 cases in third-party states, providing support through locating and interviewing witnesses, disclosing evidence, and delivering expert testimony.¹⁰⁸ In the months preceding the mandate's conclusion, the UN Secretary-General barrister and Labour member of the House of Lords. (UNSG) requested an upgrade to the UN's archiving Other speakers included Hasan Jameel from C4JR, system to allow for the active management of all Natia Navrouzov of Yazda, Ana Peyró Llopis, Acting ISIL-related evidence and ensure accessibility for Special Advisor and Head of UNITAD, Dr. Dindar competent authorities globally.¹⁰⁹ However, this Zebari, KRG Coordinator for International Advocacy, recommendation, strongly supported by the C4JR and Shireen Khudeda, member of the Yazidi Survivors as well, was not implemented, leaving UNITAD's Network (YSN), among others. The event provided substantial evidentiary holdings inaccessible for recommendations to ensure that the conclusion of future accountability proceedings on a global scale.¹¹⁰ UNITAD's mandate would not obstruct the pursuit of justice for ISIL victims.

In anticipation of the end of UNITAD's mandate, C4JR hosted several events to highlight the implications In response to UNITAD's closure, C4JR's Criminal of the mandate's conclusion. C4JR's Criminal Justice Justice Working Group issued a statement urging Working Group held an internal online Q&A session to Irag to build on UNITAD's foundational work in future discuss the group's position paper on the wind-down justice and accountability efforts.¹¹³ The statement process.¹¹¹ This session allowed C4JR members and called the Iragi government to prioritize the passage those engaged with the organization to ask questions of legislation that incorporates international crimes about UNITAD's closure and explore the next steps into domestic law, enabling the prosecution of for justice and accountability. Additionally, C4JR genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity hosted a public online event coinciding with the EU within Iraq. The statement also emphasized the need Day Against Impunity for Genocide, Crimes Against for the establishment of a comprehensive witness Humanity, and War Crimes.¹¹² The event featured a protection program to safeguard those testifying in distinguished panel of experts, including a keynote future proceedings. address by Baroness Helena Kennedy KC, Scottish



In the wake of UNITAD's closure, Irag established a National Center for International Judicial Cooperation in December 2024, to store and utilize all evidence of ISIL crimes.¹¹⁴ According to Iraq's National Report submitted to the Human Rights Council, a national team has been formed under the leadership of the Supreme Judicial Council to collect and document evidence to hold ISIL criminals responsible for their actions, to preserve the material in a national archive, and coordinate with third countries in prosecuting perpetrators and identifying their whereabouts via the International Criminal Police Organizations (INTERPOL).¹¹⁵

In February 2025, C4JR's Criminal Justice Working Group organized a meeting with the National Center for International Judicial Cooperation's head, Judge Ali Hussein Jafat, to establish cooperation between Iraqi CSOs and the Iraqi judiciary to ensure the justice process remains survivor-centered and transparent.¹¹⁶ The meeting was attended by C4JR's Criminal Justice Working Group focal point, Hasan Jamal, Yazda's Executive Director, Natia Navrouzov and Head of Programs, Zoë Paris, and William Warda from Hammurabi Human Rights Organization. During the meeting, Judge Jafat outlined the center's key objectives, including maintaining a comprehensive database on ISIL crimes, facilitating victims' access to justice, and addressing the issuance of legal documents to children born during ISIL control. Concerns over the effectiveness of UNITAD's data and the rejection of an international tribunal were also discussed, with the judiciary reaffirming that ISIL prosecutions would continue through Iraq's national courts. While the National Center supports prosecuting ISIL members for international crimes, until the passing of legislation to criminalize core international crimes, Judge Jafat noted that prosecutions will proceed using the Anti-Terrorism Law alongside the Yazidi Survivors Law. The center emphasized the importance of victim protection and the enforcement of the Witness Protection Law to ensure fair trials, engaging survivors as civil claimants and witnesses in judicial proceedings, and CSO collaboration in sharing relevant documents to support legal proceedings. Additionally, discussions covered Iraq's initiative to establish an International Day for ISIL Victims.



The meeting marked an important first step in establishing direct engagement with the National Center, C4JR and its member organizations have created a foundation for ongoing dialogue, ensuring that victims' voices remain central in legal proceedings. However, continued efforts are needed to ensure that justice processes align with international criminal law standards and address the expectations of survivors and affected communities. While challenges remain, this initial exchange set the stage for future cooperation in strengthening accountability mechanisms, improving victim protection, and advocating for incorporating and genocide into the domestic legal framework. international crimes into Iraq's legal framework. Additionally, Iraq has yet to establish a dedicated criminal accountability mechanism with jurisdiction over these international crimes.

Domestic Legislation on International Crimes and Criminal Accountability Mechanism

In July 2024, an Iraqi court sentenced the wife of former ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to death, accusing her of complicity in crimes against Yazidi women and classifying these crimes as genocide One of the most significant barriers to achieving and crimes against humanity.¹¹⁷ The Karkh Criminal justice in Iraq is the absence of legislation that Court stated that the verdict was issued under incorporates war crimes, crimes against humanity, Iraq's anti-terrorism law and the Yazidi Survivors

Law (YSL), categorizing the crimes as genocide. Shortly afterward, a Baghdad court also sentenced a suspected ISIL member to death for "committing genocide" against Yazidis.¹¹⁸ According to the GDSA an ISIL perpetrator was convicted in the Netherlands Director General, the latter ruling was derived from the provisions of the YSL, following coordination with the Supreme Judicial Council.¹¹⁹ The GDSA continues to assist judicial authorities by providing evidence and testimonies to charge perpetrators with genocide and crimes against humanity.

Although these rulings may be seen as a significant step in recognizing the gravity of ISIL's crimes, they were not based on the international crimes framework-which is still missing in Iraq-but rather on the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13.¹²⁰ This legal gap complicates the prosecution of such offenses and raises concerns about the adequacy of existing laws in delivering justice for survivors. On the Day of International Criminal Justice, C4JR highlighted these challenges, urging the Iraqi government to enact legislation that incorporates international crimes into domestic law.¹²¹ Such reforms are essential to ensure that all victims of ISIL atrocities receive the justice they deserve.

Third-Party States' Justice Efforts

This year witnessed notable advancements in the pursuit of justice for ISIL atrocities outside Irag. On December 11, 2024, the District Court of the Hague in the Netherlands delivered a historic verdict in the Hasna A. case. The Dutch national was found guilty of

membership in a terrorist organization and aiding and abetting crimes against humanity by enslaving two Yazidi women in Syria.¹²² This marked the first time for crimes against Yazidis. The court sentenced Hasna A. to 10 years in prison, exceeding the prosecutor's initial request for an 8-year sentence. To ensure accessibility for survivors, the court live-streamed the verdict with simultaneous interpretation from Dutch to Kurmancî-the first language of Yazidi survivorsand Yazda organized screenings in Duhok and Sinjar, allowing members of the Yazidi community to witness the trial's outcome in real time.¹²³

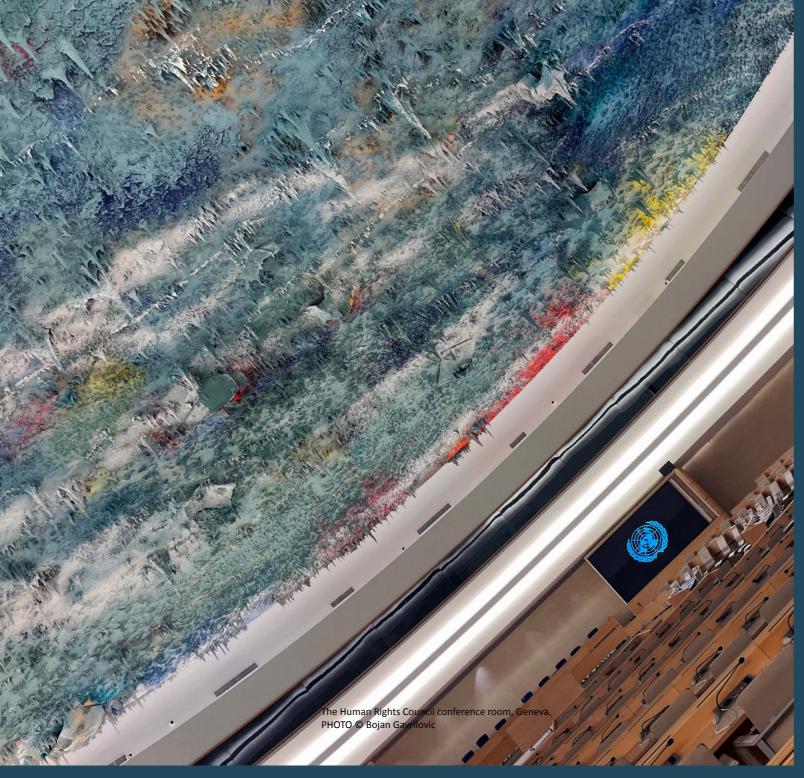
In Sweden, authorities made a significant step toward justice by charging Lina Laina Ishaq, a 52-yearold Swedish citizen, with genocide, crimes against humanity, and serious war crimes.¹²⁴ The charges stem from atrocities allegedly committed against Yazidi women and children in Ragga, Syria, between August 2014 and December 2016. The trial, which began on October 7, 2024, is Sweden's first prosecution of ISILrelated atrocities targeting Yazidis. The case relied on evidence collected by UNITAD and drew on Yazda's comprehensive report, Destroying the Soul of the Yazidis: Cultural Heritage Destruction During the Islamic State's Genocide Against the Yazidis.¹²⁵

These developments demonstrate the vital role of third-state prosecutions in holding ISIL members accountable for their crimes against Yazidis. From the perspective of survivors and victims' families, such prosecutions remain the most viable avenue for justice, as domestic mechanisms often fall short

of meeting international standards for accountability be included in any general or special amnesty."¹³¹ and fairness. They also underscore the importance of A persistent issue remains, however, in that one international cooperation, survivor engagement, and cannot determine with certainty who among ISIL the use of detailed documentation to advance justice members committed serious crimes and thereby for victims of genocide and other atrocity crimes. should be excluded from the General Amnesty Law. The reason for this is that alleged perpetrators were **General Amnesty Law** prosecuted solely under counterterrorism laws, primarily and often exclusively on the charge of ISIL Law No. 27 of 2016, General Amnesty Law, submitted membership, with no distinction made for the severity by the Legal, Security, and Defense Committee and of the charges brought against suspects nor efforts to Human Rights Committee, has undergone revisions prioritize the prosecution of the gravest crimes.¹³²

over the years.¹²⁶ The Iraqi Parliament approved the Second Amendment to the law on January 21, 2025, The Federal Supreme Court of Irag on February 4, and came into effect on January 30. The conditions set 2025, suspended the implementation of the General within the law exclude amnesty for those convicted Amnesty Law, along with two other contested bills of terrorism and serious crimes and allow for the passed in a single vote by the Iraqi Parliamentretrial of individuals if they allege their confession Personal Status Law and the Property Restitution was extracted under coercion.¹²⁷ It was met with Law-pending the final review.¹³³ The Supreme Judicial the expression of concern from different sectors of Council reaffirmed its commitment to enforcing the society.¹²⁸ The Yazidi community strongly condemned Amnesty law, despite the Federal Supreme Court's the Iraqi Parliament's passing of the law, warning that ruling. It appears that, at the time of writing, Iraqi the legislation could pave the way for ISIL members to courts continue to receive and consider amnesty evade accountability. In a statement, the community requests.¹³⁴ While amnesties may be employed in a described the law as a "shocking betrayal" that post-conflict setting as a legitimate transitional justice represents "a political deal disconnected from legal tool, their use is clearly limited under international law and ethical standards."129 To address these concerns, in that they cannot result in impunity for international the head of the National Center for International crimes nor can they interfere with victims' right to an Judicial Cooperation, Judge Ali Hussein Jafat, clarified effective remedy, including reparations.¹³⁵ In the Iraqi in a statement from the Supreme Judicial Council, context, for amnesty to achieve the desired effect, that the law does not include perpetrators of the careful consideration in designing and implementing crimes of kidnapping and enslavement of Yazidis and is called for, including conducting consultations other components.¹³⁰ This is in line with YSL Article with all affected communities, setting up relevant 9.1 which stipulates that "The perpetrators of the safeguards, and conducting fair trials for specific crimes of kidnapping and captivity of Yazidis shall not international crimes against alleged perpetrators.





IV. INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS & COLLABORATION

International advocacy continues to be instrumental The C4JR submitted a report to the UN Special in highlighting the need for justice and accountability Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman for victims of the ISIL genocide, especially as we or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Dr. Alice Jill mark the tenth anniversary of this atrocity. Recent Edwards, for her thematic report on crimes of sexual events have helped draw attention to the progress torture during armed conflict.¹³⁶ This submission, of the YSL's implementation and highlighted ongoing informed by C4JR's Rehabilitation Working Group, challenges in pursuing justice and accountability as provided an in-depth overview of the impact of we marked the tenth anniversary of the genocide.

CRSV on communities in Iraq. During her unofficial

visit to Iraq, Dr. Edwards consulted with local NGOs, comprehensive legislation on international crimes. C4JR members, and survivors over three days in Colombia called for redoubled efforts to secure Erbil and Duhok.¹³⁷ Her visit aimed to support the justice and reparations for survivors of ISIL crimes, YSL's implementation, particularly its rehabilitation particularly women and girls. Meanwhile, Costa measures, and to gather insights for her thematic Rica raised broader human rights concerns, calling report presented at the 79th United Nations General for the abolition of the death penalty and urging Iraq to uphold fair trial guarantees and protections Assembly session. The report highlighted good practices and challenges in addressing wartime sexual for the right to life in both law and practice. These torture, as well as providing rehabilitation for victims recommendations collectively underscore the need and survivors.¹³⁸ for sustained commitment to addressing gaps in justice, support, and legal protections for survivors to In July 2024, C4JR and the Jiyan Foundation for ensure meaningful accountability and reparations in Human Rights jointly submitted a report for Iraq's the aftermath of ISIL atrocities.

4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR), focusing on justice and reparations for survivors of ISIL atrocities.¹³⁹ In December 2024, C4JR submitted input to the The submission identified significant gaps in the UN Special Rapporteur on Truth, Justice, and YSL's implementation, such as limited access to reparations, lack of transparency in eligibility and appeals, insufficient rehabilitation and restitution the documentation of serious human rights violations measures, and inadequate accountability for ISIL crimes. Advocacy efforts took place in Irag and Geneva with many diplomatic missions in Iraq, state missions in Geneva, and EU delegations briefed on humanity committed by ISIL. It highlights challenges the report priorities.

Iraq's UPR review took place on January 27, 2025, with lack of coordination between state institutions and the Working Group highlighting key areas for reform, civil society in using documentation for justice and particularly in the pursuit of justice, reparations, reparations. The submission also discusses good and legal protections for survivors of ISIL crimes.¹⁴⁰ practices, including culturally sensitive guidelines and The United Kingdom called for strengthening the ethical engagement toolkits, to ensure a survivorindependence and capacity of Iraq's judiciary to centered approach in transitional justice processes. ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of sexual violence cases. Germany emphasized the In the face of ongoing challenges, international need for comprehensive support mechanisms for advocacy and collaboration remain vital for survivors, particularly women with children born of amplifying the voices of ISIL's victims and ensuring conflict-related sexual violence, and urged Irag to accountability. These collective efforts underline the guarantee their access to public services. Additionally, need for sustained engagement from governments, Germany recommended reforms to personal status institutions, and civil society to address critical gaps in laws, advocating for exceptions that would allow justice, reparations, and survivor support. children born of CRSV to take on their mother's name and religion, as well as the implementation of existing legal protections for these children.

Italy stressed the importance of fully and equitably implementing all provisions of the 2021 Yazidi Survivors' Law, while the Netherlands highlighted the need for consistency in judicial practices, urging Iraq to ensure that its criminal code is uniformly applied and to take concrete steps toward developing

Reparation's thematic report to be presented at the Human Rights Council.¹⁴¹ The submission focused on in the context of transitional justice processes in the Iragi context, detailing documentation efforts in Iragin response to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against such as over-documentation, the burden placed on survivors to provide testimony repeatedly, and the

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V. FINAL REMARKS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the YSL and broader transitional justice efforts in Iraq represent critical steps toward addressing the suffering endured by survivors of ISIL atrocities. While progress has been made in certain areas, obstacles remain that hinder the realization of justice, accountability, and reparations. Survivors continue to face bureaucratic hurdles, inconsistent access to reparations, and gaps in essential services such as education, rehabilitation, and employment.

A decade has passed since the onset of the ISIL atrocities, a sobering reminder that time continues to pass, and with it, the urgency of providing survivors with the justice they deserve. The path to an inclusive and effective reparations process requires concerted action from all actors, including the Gol, the KRG, international partners, and local civil society organizations.

As the tenth anniversary of the atrocities passes, the window of opportunity to make meaningful strides in justice and reparations for survivors is narrowing. The coming years must be marked by a renewed commitment to overcoming these challenges, implementing the provisions of the YSL comprehensively, and ensuring that all survivors regardless of their community or location—are supported and empowered.

The following recommendations aim to provide clear steps toward addressing these ongoing challenges and advancing the promise of the YSL for the survivors of ISIL crimes.



To the General Directorate for Survivors' Affairs:

Provide effective and timely communication of YSL application decisions to applicants, containing information on next steps, including when and how to obtain benefits in accessible and easily disseminated modalities;

Issue dated rejection letters to YSL applicants, either as a standardized practice or upon request, detailing the grounds on which the application was rejected and information on next steps in the appeals process;

Specify and clearly communicate in an accessible format the applicable deadline for submitting the

second appeal to the Court of First Instance following a first appeal rejection;

Create, publish, and widely disseminate an appeals process information leaflet that clearly outlines the steps available to those facing rejected applications in an easy-to-understand format, available in the languages most commonly used and understood by survivors and provided along with the YSL application's written decision;

Intensify efforts to set up a viable system for providing quality medical and MHPSS services in line with best practices and in a location within reach of survivors and their families;

Consider partnering with Iraqi NGOs and academic

institutions with a view of spearheading a consortium able to set up and run a sustainable, survivor-centered model for the provision of accessible, holistic quality rehabilitation services guaranteed under the YSL; document missing persons and avoid the burden of over-documentation often placed on survivors and victims' families;

Establish a survivor-centered education model catering to survivors' unique needs by embedding education support within a broader holistic rehabilitation model; Establish an independent, impartial, accountable, and

Establish an independent, impartial, accountable, and confidential mechanism to register and respond to complaints about the implementation of the YSL and engagement with GDSA and YSL Committee;

Exhaust existing databases and foster collaboration with experienced organizations to enhance efforts to

Develop a specialized state-sponsored system of reintegration to education targeted specifically at survivors of ISIL;



To the YSL Committee:

Apply reasonable assumptions of eligibility and drop the extra-legal investigation papers requirement as a mandatory supporting document for YSL applicants by instead, as outlined in by-laws, taking into consideration the other supporting documents available or inviting applicants to be interviewed by the Committee; 318/2014

Clarify eligibility criteria around applicants' age by defining the meaning of "girl" and resolve the eligibility challenges for survivors of CRSV who suffered the violation while in detention;

End the practice within the biometric process of verifying Survivors' claims with mukhtars who may not be able to support the verification of claims, particularly in the case of CRSV;

To the Committee for the Search for Kidnapped Persons:

Ensure consistent outreach, engagement, and consultation with the victims' families, CSOs, and other actors involved in documenting the missing or conducting searches;

Exhaust existing databases and foster collaboration with experienced organizations to enhance efforts to document missing persons and avoid the burden of over-documentation often placed on survivors and victims' families;

A woman mourns her loved ones during the excavation of a mass grave in Tel-Azer, West Sinjar. PHOTO © Noori Issa.

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To the Government of Iraq:

Incorporate genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes into national law, establishing a survivorfriendly criminal accountability mechanism consistent with international standards of human rights, with jurisdiction over international crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq or outside of Iraq against Iraqi nationals or non-Iraq nationals residing in Iraq;

Enact domestic legislation and/or implement measures necessary to guarantee fair and independent criminal proceedings for ISIL crimes, conducted in a survivor-centered manner and in accordance with international law, including adequate witness protection, victim participation, and public trials;

Consider conducting consultations with survivors, civil society, community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders with a view to designing a transitional justice roadmap to define roles, reach, and safeguards for deploying particular transitional justice tools, especially those that might be contested such as amnesty.

Make an exception to the hiring freeze introduced through Budget Law and allocate qualified, permanent staff members dedicated to processing applications in a timely and efficient manner, coordinating with governmental bodies in the distribution of YSL benefits;

Make an exception to the constraint on receiving a dual salary for beneficiaries of the YSL to ensure that monthly compensation can be enjoyed with public employment;

Consider removing the hiring freeze for survivors declared eligible to receive priority in public employment as a form of reparation under the YSL;

Foster durable solutions for IDPs by ensuring that

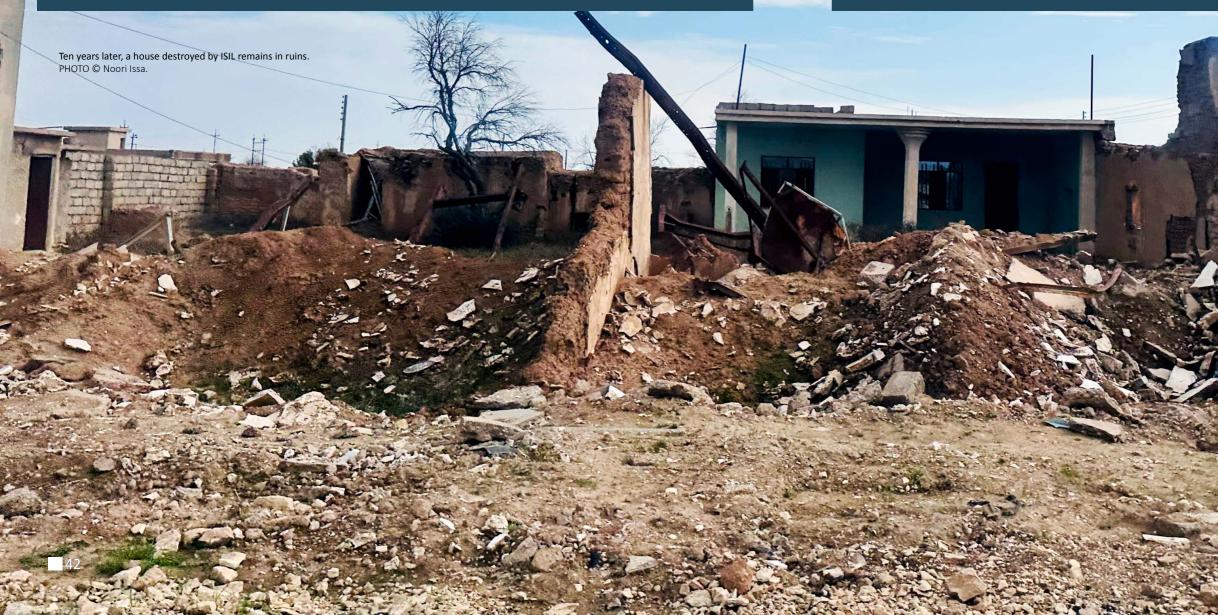
land allocation and housing reparative measures for survivors; recognized under the YSL are made available throughout Iraq;

Continue the sharing of evidence collected by UNITAD with third states or with international courts and other bodies, and cooperation between Iraq and others to achieve accountability of ISIL crimes;

To the Ministry of Health:

Intensify efforts to set up a viable system for providing guality medical and MHPSS services in line with best practices and in a location within reach of survivors and their families;

Enhance collaboration between the GoI and KRI to ensure that rehabilitation centers are strategically located in areas that are accessible to survivors, while also minimizing the risk of further re-traumatization



To Ministry of Education:

Establish a survivor-centered education model catering to survivors' unique needs by embedding education support within a broader holistic rehabilitation model;

To the Kurdistan Regional Government:

Enhance coordination with the GoI to fully implement the YSL, harmonize reparation measures, ensuring that survivors are not burdened with navigating multiple, separate programs to access the support and benefits they are entitled to;

To International Organizations and Third States:

Continue to support the capacity of the GDSA and the YSL Committee to fulfill their mandates, including through capacity building, technical guidance, and material assistance;

Ensure regular funding opportunities for CSOs, including survivors associations, working to support YSL implementation through monitoring, reporting, legal assistance, and other meaningful activities;

Continue to closely monitor and report on the implementation of the YSL by coordinating and engaging with governmental and non-governmental actors and survivors, conducting awareness-raising sessions on YSL, and providing assistance to survivors in submitting applications;

To Civil Society Organizations:

Monitor the implementation of the YSL and advocate for an accessible, survivor-centered application mechanism, fair review process, and swift and proper distribution of benefits;

Engage in joint advocacy with fellow CSOs, but also other institutional actors, to address the pressing issues surrounding YSL implementation.

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Sharia IDP camp in Duhok PHOTO © Bilind Tahir/ Rudaw



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ANNEX I. LIST OF C4JR MEMBERS

ASUDA

Better World Organization for Community Development (BWO) CAPNI for Humanitarian Aids in Iraq Civil Development Organization (CDO) Dak Organization Dak Organization Emma Eyzidi Organization for Documentation Farida Global Organization Ghasin Alzaiton Hammurabi Human Rights Organization (HHRO)

HÁWAR. help

Iraqi Educational Association AL Basra Iragi Institution for Development (IID) Jinda Organization Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights Justice Organization for Minority Rights (JOMR) Methra Organization Nadia's Initiative (NI) National Centre for Human Rights (NHCR) Nisha Organization Organization of the Victims of Iraq in Spyker 1700 Peace and Freedom Organization **SEED Foundation**

Sustainable Peace Foundation
TAJDID Iraq
The Free Yezidi Foundation
The Lotus Flower
The Observer Human Rights Center (OHRC)
To Reconcile Organization (TRO)
Turkmen Rescue Foundation
Women Leadership Institute (WLI)
Women Legal Assistance Organization (WOLA)
Yazda

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