

C4JR Criminal Justice Working Group Statement on the EU Day Against Impunity for Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity: Accountability as a Foundation for Sustainable Development

23 May 2025

"Iraq is where the terror started for us, Yazidis; It is from where most ISIL leaders are from; It is where we were killed or abducted from. If ISIL members are not persecuted in Iraq, then where will they be prosecuted? It is important that this justice takes place in Iraq, only then will we be able to trust our country again. We have been waiting for this for eight years, until when will we need to wait?"

— The Yazidi Survivors Network

On the EU Day Against Impunity for Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity, the C4JR Criminal Justice Working Group echoes survivors' plea for home-grown criminal justice to address ISIL's atrocity crimes in Iraq.

A decade has passed since ISIL committed unspeakable atrocities against civilians in Iraq, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Yet, to this day, Iraq lacks a legal framework that allows these crimes to be prosecuted for what they are under international law. Lack of progress on the long-awaited draft law on international crimes leaves much to be desired and a substantial gap in the pursuit of justice.

However, true accountability requires more than legislation: proper criminal accountability mechanism, fair trial guarantees, safeguards and procedures enabling meaningful participation of survivors. Moreover, their voices, experiences, and expectations should be reflected in every stage of the justice processes, from investigations to prosecutions and beyond. Survivors are not nameless individuals; they are rights-holders entitled to truth, justice, and reparation.

On this day, C4JR calls on the Iraqi authorities to:

- Urgently adopt the draft law on international crimes in line with international standards.
- Ensure a survivor-centered approach to justice by enabling full and active participation of survivors in criminal proceedings, in line with the [C4JR Position Paper on an ISIL Accountability Mechanism in Iraq](#).

Survivors need closure, but, to move forward and fully commit to improving the daily lives of its citizens through sustainable development, so does Iraq. Survivor-centered trials can deliver such closure, enabling the nation to turn the page and begin a new chapter.