

# Welcome to the Tenth C4JR YSL NEWSLETTER

The Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) publishes regular newsletters to share accurate and up-to-date information regarding the Yazidi Survivors' Law (YSL) and share the views and experiences of all actors involved 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 2,216 of ISIL covered by the Yazidi Survivors' Law in April. More details can be found on the Directorate's Facebook page: <https://tinyurl.com/4mzpc4p2>.

### Implementation of the YSL

Important updates:

- **Residential Land Ownership Titles Issued to Survivors**

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has announced the successful completion of procedures to issue residential land ownership titles to Yazidi and Turkmen survivors of ISIL. A total of 262 plots of land have been distributed to survivors in Sinjar and Tel Afar, marking a meaningful step forward in fulfilling survivors' right to long-term stability and security through land ownership, as outlined in Article 6.2 of the YSL. Read more about the process here: <https://tinyurl.com/ywwh2zvp>.

- **Remote Testimony Mechanism Expands Access for YSL Applicants Abroad**

Launched in November 2024, the Directorate—working in coordination with the Al-Qosh Investigation Court, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Iraqi embassies and consulates in Germany and France—has enabled YSL applicants living abroad to submit their testimonies via video



*The Directorate, in collaboration with the Nineveh Court of Appeals—Al-Qosh Investigation Court and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conducts remote testimony via video conferencing for YSL applicants residing abroad. Photo Credit: The General Directorate for Survivors Affairs.*

conferencing. The first interviews began on December 12, 2024, and were hosted at Iraqi diplomatic missions in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Paris, every Thursday, with three to five survivors interviewed daily.

In May, the director of the Directorate, Ms. Sarab Elias, stated that out of 150 people who registered with the Directorate to avail of remote testimony submission, 120 have been interviewed, with 30 remaining.

This initiative marks a significant step toward making the YSL application process more accessible to survivors living outside Iraq. However, key questions remain, particularly regarding whether applicants abroad will be required to undergo security clearances and meet other evidentiary requirements, such as providing testimony from three witnesses who are YSL beneficiaries. These demanding criteria have posed challenges for applicants and were discussed in detail in C4JR's YSL Newsletter Issue #6. Read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5hz4cx8>.

- **Medical Cards Now Issued to Survivors**

In January 2025, the Directorate, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Nineveh Health Department, began issuing medical cards to survivors covered under the YSL.

These healthcare cards grant survivors free access to medical services across all facilities operated by the Iraqi Ministry of Health. They will also be valid at future healthcare centers established by the Directorate, offering vital support for survivors' physical and psychological rehabilitation, as envisioned under the YSL. Read more in the Directorate's Facebook post, here: <https://tinyurl.com/38p6bt3m>.

## Related News

- Between February 5 and 22, 2025, Iraqi authorities exhumed 13 mass graves and killing sites in Sinjar and surrounding areas, including Sinjar City, Tel Azer, and Zumany. These operations were led by key national institutions—the Mass Graves and Missing Directorate, the Medico-Legal Directorate, and the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence—with support from the International Commission on Missing Persons. This recent effort brings the total number of exhumed sites in Sinjar and Ba'aj to 74 since March 2019, marking a continued step toward truth, recognition, and justice for victims of ISIS atrocities. Read more in the press release by C4JR member Yazda: <https://tinyurl.com/bddufr5v>.

- On February 22, 2025, the remains of 32 victims of the Yazidi Genocide were returned to their families and laid to rest during a solemn funeral procession in Kocho. This marks the seventh round of repatriations. Since exhumations began, over 750 victim remains have been recovered, with 242 victims identified and returned to their families for proper burial. This ceremony represents an essential step in the long journey toward healing and acknowledgment of the atrocities committed against the Yazidi community. Read the statement from C4JR member Farida Global Organization here: <https://tinyurl.com/4jezadcr>.



*The burial of the remains of 32 victims of the Yazidi Genocide occurred in February, following a funeral procession in Kocho. Photo Credit: Farida Global Organization.*

- C4JR's annual report, *More than "Ink on Paper": Third Yazidi Survivors' Law Monitoring Report*, was published in February. It provides a critical assessment of the implementation of the YSL, documenting both the progress made and challenges outstanding. Read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/5at49tsb>.



- In April, Taboo LLC published its guide for NGOs assisting individuals to apply for reparations under the YSL, developed in collaboration with the Free Yezidi Foundation and Farida Global Organization. The guide provides practical guidelines for YSL applications, including survivor-centric and trauma-informed approaches in survivor engagement, how to fill out the YSL application form, prepare evidentiary requirements, and an overview of the appeals process. Read the guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/y52xwx3a>.
- In April, Nadia's Initiative gathered survivors at their Women's Center to meet with representatives from the Directorate for an information session on the YSL, focusing on benefits such as land allocation, education, compensation, medical needs, and the continued search for the missing. In attendance, along with survivors based in Sinjar, were survivors from the diaspora, including Canada and Australia, who joined virtually. Read more on Nadia's Initiative Facebook page here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8cmf95>.

Navrouzov, Head of Programs, Zoë Paris, and William Warda from Hammurabi Human Rights Organization. Following the meeting, Judge Ali Hussein Jafat clarified in a statement from the Supreme Judicial Council that crimes stipulated in the YSL will not be covered under the amendments to the general amnesty law. Read more about the meeting in C4JR's third annual report here: <https://tinyurl.com/5at49tsb>.



*Members of C4JR met with the National Center for International Judicial Cooperation in Baghdad in February. Photo credit: Yazda Organization.*

## Accountability Efforts

- In February, C4JR organized a meeting with the National Center for International Judicial Cooperation's head, Judge Ali Hussein Jafat, to establish cooperation between Iraqi civil society organizations and the Iraqi judiciary. The National Center for International Judicial Cooperation was established in December 2024 to store and utilize all evidence of ISIL crimes following the end of the UNITAD mandate. The meeting was attended by C4JR's Criminal Justice Working Group focal point, Hasan Jamal, Yazda's Executive Director, Natia
- On May 7, the National Center for International Judicial Cooperation heard the testimony of a Yazidi survivor via video conferencing, following the completion of legal procedures at Karkh Investigation Court. The Supreme Judicial Council received a request from the Basic Court in Pristina, Kosovo, regarding the case against an ISIL member. In a statement, the Directorate confirmed its coordination with the National Center for International Judicial Cooperation in facilitating the Yazidi survivor's testimony. Read the statement on the Directorate's Facebook page: <https://tinyurl.com/3yfb6uyh>.



## Challenges

In each issue of our newsletter, we spotlight key challenges faced by survivors and stakeholders in the implementation of the YSL. This edition focuses on the appeals process—a crucial mechanism for justice that continues to present serious obstacles for many applicants.

A persistent issue, previously documented in C4JR's YSL newsletters and annual reports, is the lack of clear and written communication around both initial application rejections and appeal decisions. YSL applicants whose applications are rejected by the 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 tight 30-day deadline to submit a first appeal. You can read more about this in C4JR's YSL Newsletter Issue #4: <https://tinyurl.com/y5swbnhj>.

If the YSL Committee rejects a first appeal, applicants can submit a final appeal to the Court of First Instance. Available information suggests that appeals to the Court of

First Instance follow the general procedures of filing a civil lawsuit, which sets the timeframe for an appeal at 15 years. To ensure YSL administrative procedures provide fair, effective, and prompt access to justice, clear and accessible official instructions on all aspects of the appeals process, including the various appeal timeframes, should be made available to YSL applicants.

Following consultation with YSL applicants, C4JR heard directly from survivors affected by these gaps. One applicant, for example, only received notice that her application had been rejected by the Committee two months after the decision was officially issued, well past the deadline to submit a first appeal. Others shared that they were verbally informed their application was denied due to "lack of evidence," despite having completed all required steps, including providing biometric data, which includes clearance by the National Security and Intelligence Office, and testimony from local Mukhtars.



To support survivors navigating these challenges, C4JR is offering legal aid to applicants throughout the YSL application and appeals process through qualified lawyers. If you or someone you know needs legal support, please contact us at [legalaids@c4jr.org](mailto:legalaids@c4jr.org) or by phone at +964 750 851 6311.

## Success Story

### Recognition of Yazidi Land Rights in Sinjar — Ending 50 Years of Dispossession

In a landmark moment for justice and restitution, Yazidis in Sinjar are finally gaining legal ownership of land and homes that have been denied to them for five decades. The journey to ending land dispossession in Sinjar took a major step forward on December 27, 2022, when Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani made the historic decision to grant Yazidis ownership of lands in 11 collective towns across Sinjar, al-Qayrawan, and al-Qahtaniyah. This decision was crucial to resolving the historic land ownership challenges that had previously prevented official recognition of Sinjar residents' property rights.

Building on this progress, Resolution No. 227, passed by the Iraqi Council of Ministers in March 2025, allowed the Nineveh Governorate Municipalities Directorate to begin distributing over 1,200 property ownership deeds to residents in Sinjar, al-Qayrawan, and al-Qahtaniyah. A key provision of this resolution was the waiver of the 20,000 IQD per square meter fee, which had previously placed a heavy financial burden on Yazidi community members seeking to reclaim their land.

Thanks to years of advocacy and collaboration between local and international partners, including UN-Habitat, over 103,000 individuals have benefited from the issuance of 18,218 land occupancy certificates, which are now

recognized as valid evidence for obtaining title deeds. You can read UNAMI's statement on the development here: <https://tinyurl.com/2szjy48z>.

This large-scale restitution represents a pivotal step in recognizing Yazidi rights, restoring dignity, and laying the foundation for return and recovery in Sinjar. It is more than a legal success—it is the long-awaited end to a half-century of land injustice.

While the YSL recognizes the right to land and housing, acknowledging the long-term stability and security needs of survivors, many of whom lost their homes during the ISIL conflict, to date, survivors have only been able to exercise their land and housing rights under the YSL in their areas of origin. Ideally, a rights-based approach to durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) would enable survivors to choose where land and housing benefits are located.

The resolution of historic land ownership challenges has been critical to addressing systemic injustice, promoting equality, and empowering a community affected by dispossession. However, transformative justice requires that survivors, regardless of where they currently reside, can meaningfully access their right to land, housing, and reparations.

## Coming up in the newsletter

C4JR is currently developing an anonymous survey to gather feedback on survivors' experiences with the reparation payments provided under the Yazidi Survivors Law (YSL). This survey aims to assess how these payments are impacting survivors' lives and overall well-being, and to identify areas where reparative measures can be improved.

We believe that understanding survivors' satisfaction with the reparation process is crucial for ensuring that these measures truly address their needs. Updates on the survey's progress, as well as its findings, will be shared in upcoming newsletters. Stay tuned for more information!

## 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:

- Women and girls who survived 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://tinyurl.com/53xtt4zv>;
- 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://tinyurl.com/3rfrdhf2>.

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://tinyurl.com/5b567sp7>.

## About us

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.



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