

**Human Security in Northern Iraq: The Yazidi Case Study**

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**Table of Contents**

|                                                              |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Abstract .....                                               | 3  |
| Human Security in Northern Iraq: The Yazidi Case Study ..... | 4  |
| Yazidi Background and Situation .....                        | 5  |
| Human Security in Sinjar .....                               | 7  |
| Economic, Social, and Political Issues .....                 | 8  |
| Economic Issues.....                                         | 9  |
| Social Issues.....                                           | 10 |
| Political issues.....                                        | 12 |
| Shifting U.S. Foreign Policy .....                           | 13 |
| Reconciliation and Prosecution of Genocidaires .....         | 15 |
| Conclusion .....                                             | 17 |
| References .....                                             | 20 |
| Table 1 .....                                                | 28 |

### Abstract

The ethnic minority group known as the Yazidis experienced a genocidal campaign by the Islamic State in 2014. Since that time, the world's attention has focused on helping the Yazidis recover and hold those responsible for the genocide accountable. Developments since the genocide suggest human security concerns remain insufficient in northern Iraq. Mental health care is lacking among the Yazidi community for both men and particularly women. Economic, political, and cultural insecurity in northern Iraq present unique problems. The lack of a modern, internationally adaptable legal system in Iraq threatens to marginalize genocide prosecutions in favor of state terrorism cases, undermining human security. The United States passed the first bill recognizing genocide in its history in 2018, but commitments thus far, both financially and symbolic, lack efficacy. Despite some progress in northern Iraq, human security remains fragile. Insecurity permeates daily life in Iraq, and a new generation of Yazidis now know the meaning of *ferman*, the Yazidi word for genocide and trauma.

*Keywords:* Iraq, Yazidis, genocide, human security

### **Human Security in Northern Iraq: The Yazidi Case Study**

The ethnic minority group of Yazidis (also known as Yezidis, Ezidis) live in Northern Iraq in the Singar (also known as the Shingal) region of the Nineveh Governorate. The Yazidis are an endogenous non-Islamic religious group with a long history of oppression from governmental and other ethnic groups in Iraq (Suvari, 2016; Van Zoonen & Wirya, 2017). The Yazidi people suffered a genocidal campaign in 2014 when the Islamic State forces, without provocation, attacked and slaughtered thousands of peaceful Yazidis and captured women and children, forcing them into slavery, sex work, and indoctrination into Islam (U.N. Human Rights Council, 2016). This research paper will analyze the human security situation in the Nineveh Governorate, post-Islamic State, and attempt to highlight the current threats to the Yazidis three years after the Islamic State's defeat. This analysis attempts to analyze the human security perspective focusing on recovery, reconciliation, and reintegration prospects in Iraq. This qualitative research will show that insecurity remains one of the most significant factors preventing reintegration along with bleak economic recovery prospects. Is human security achievable in an ethnically diverse post-conflict setting in a fragile state? Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government documents, and field research by others suggest that the Yazidis have little hope of recovering soon. Psychological trauma, mental health, and dwindling foreign aid represent but a few of the Yazidis' problems in northern Iraq. Yazidis' youngest generation now knows the meaning of the word *ferman*, a transgenerational term for genocide and trauma (Ceri et al., 2016; Spät, 2017).

### **Yazidi Background and Situation**

In 2014, the Islamic State attacked the Yazidis in an attempt to purge Iraq of religious and ethnic minorities. The genocide, the first-ever recognized by the United States, was also documented by the United Nations, which propelled the Yazidis onto the world stage in 2014 (H.R. 379, 2017; H.R. 390, 2018; U.N. Human Rights Council, 2016). The author investigated the Yazidi genocide in 2019, focusing on the psychological mechanisms that permit moral justification for genocide. A hypothesis for dehumanization, murder, and rape based on Albert Bandura's social-psychological theories revealed that the Islamic State acted with impunity and remorselessness during the genocide (Koenig, 2019).<sup>1</sup> Other scholars have addressed the horrors and repercussions of the genocide, particularly for women, in recent years (Boduszynski, 2016; Cheterian, 2019; Kfir, 2015; Kizilhan, 2017; Yesiltas & Kardas, 2015). This analysis focuses on human security challenges, reconciliation, and recovery prospects for the Yazidis trying to rebuild their community. The definition of human security for this paper is one that prioritizes individual well-being, irrespective of state interests, and borders (Paris, 2001).

Many Yazidis are still displaced within the country or in regional refugee camps in neighboring states, according to organizations like the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration (DMII) (DMII, 2018; U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). There are few economic opportunities for the Yazidis, who are primarily agrarian by culture. The other human security issues at play are the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and its continuing struggle for independence from the Iraqi government (Matthews et al., 2020; Spät, 2017; Van Noonen & Wirya, 2017; Zaman, 2020). This relationship threatens stability in the region for Yazidis because the KRG had historically provided security for the Yazidis within Iraq yet abandoned the Yazidi when the Islamic State forces attacked (Van Zoonen & Wirya, 2017). Yazidis are,

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<sup>1</sup> See also Cottee (2010), for more information on Bandura's theory and the Islamic State.

justifiably, wary of trusting their security to the KRG or outsiders (Abouzeid, 2018). Tensions with Baghdad and the KRG only increase the likelihood that the Yazidis continue struggling for basic human security and a path for recovery from the genocide's trauma. There are also new indications that conflict is erupting once again in northern Iraq (Abu Zeed, 2020).

The Yazidis are afforded little representation within the Iraqi political system (Spät, 2017; Zagoritou, 2019). Further complicating the recovery is gender security and the hyperfocus on rape and the way ISIS enslaved Yazidi women (Ceri et al., 2016; Ibrahim et al., 2018). This practice undermines the actual gendered problem in the Yazidi community. The genocide emasculated the male patriarchy and empowered women in ways that traditional Yazidi society discouraged or was forbidden, such as working outside the home (Černý, 2020). The psychological trauma of rape is a real and urgent concern. The trauma for male survivors of the genocide shows adverse effects such as domestic violence increasing within the Yazidi community and revenge attacks against Arabs (Amnesty International, 2015; Černý, 2020). Gender-related issues surrounding economic, social, and cultural recovery present significant problems for the Yazidi, along with recovering from the psychological trauma of genocide (Ceri et al., 2016; Buffo & Allison, 2016; Černý, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2018; Kizilhan & Noll-Hussong, 2017). While organizations like the U.N. and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are actively involved, issues remain for reconciling the gender imbalance in Yazidi culture (Abouzeid, 2018).

Shifting U.S. foreign policy goals and changes in human rights approaches by the U.S. Department of State also threaten security and contradict the spirit of H.R. 390, which recognized the special status of Yazidis as a minority religious group and placed priority on their protection (Roth, 2020). U.S. aid for the Middle East is dwindling with many NGOs leaving Iraq (DMII, 2018; U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). Finally, the Iraqi legal system has

no laws incorporating genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity. Iraq is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which prosecutes those crimes (Van Shaack, 2018). The lack of legal recourse for the Yazidis presents a problem for reconciliation and recognition internationally under United Nations Resolution 2379, which called for a full investigation and accounting of the genocide (U.N. Security Council Resolution 2379, 2017). The genocide is over, yet suffering for the entire Yazidi community continues. Democratic institutions are failing, and there is little hope for reconciliation and recovery in a country now classified as a failed state by some observers (Cordesman, 2020; Cordesman & Molot, 2019).

### **Human Security in Sinjar**

The situation in Sinjar is dire. According to reports from the U.N., NGOs, and the Danish Ministry, some 3,000 Yazidis are still listed as missing (Amnesty International, 2020; DMII, 2018; U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). The socio-economic conditions in Sinjar are worsening with increasing poverty and limited assistance (U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). The U.S. Department of State (USDOS) promised aid and special protections for Yazidis (H. R. 390, 2018). Still, the programs' results remain mixed based on the lack of a cohesive security plan in the Kurdistan region. The Yazda Organization, an NGO dedicated to Yazidi rights, published a report highlighting the creation of small businesses through USAID; however, these businesses fail to support the vast majority of Yazidis seeking work according to the U. N. High Commissioner on Refugees (2019) report (Yazda, 2019).

Further hindering Iraq's situation is the recent realignment of the Department of State position on human rights. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's 2020 *Unalienable Rights* report made clear that "unalienable rights" like those in America's Constitution are comprehensive and a priori to political establishments. *Foreign Policy* magazine contributor Seth Kaplan warns about the danger of positive rights that depend on "context resulting from custom, tradition, and

civil society” instituted through variable political institutions (Kaplan, 2020, para. 13). This line from the State Department report is representative of the problem. “While human rights are the standard against which we judge the justice of positive laws, no nation-state or international institution has a monopoly or final word on what human rights require” (USDOS, 2020b, p. 41). Human rights watch groups have widely condemned the new platform as an open invitation for countries to take a limited human rights approach based on religious mores (Kaplan, 2020; Roth, 2020). Allowing a religious or cultural determination for which human rights are unalienable places the Yazidis at an extreme disadvantage as they are a religious minority who were targeted by the Islamic State, specifically for their cultural and religious beliefs (Koenig, 2019; Matthews et al., 2019; Vale, 2019). International humanitarian laws ostensibly bind governments to treaties that they sign. However, Iraq has a history of violating human rights, and the U.S. should remain mindful of the dangerous conditions in Sinjar, which makes Yazidis vulnerable to further human rights abuses. Yazidi cultural sites, destroyed by the Islamic State, are critical for reintegration and recovery (Blake, 2011; Matthews et al., 2020).

Revenge attacks are another complication in the Sinjar area between Yazidis and Sunni Muslims (Amnesty International, 2015; Vale, 2019; Zagoritou, 2019). Attacks stem from insecurity in the area, feelings of emasculation among Yazidi men, and the fact that Arabs confiscated Yazidis’ houses after the genocide (Zagoritou, 2019). Honor is a crucial part of Yazidi society and is laid entirely on the purity of their women (Buffo & Allison, 2016). This unfortunate fact, exploited by the Islamic State through rape and sexual slavery, is one referent for the Yazidis violence towards Arabs (Černý, 2020; Vale, 2019).

### **Economic, Social, and Political Issues**

Many challenges lie ahead for the Yazidi in Iraq. The economy is in shambles, and Yazidis’ social order is facing push back from women with newfound empowerment developed

in refugee camps (Černý, 2020). Černý (2020) highlights how men in Yazidi districts feel emasculated and vengeful after the genocide. Kurds' distrust among the Yazidis is strong. The security and political fortunes are dependent on which region the Yazidis attach themselves to—Kurdistan or Iraq. These themes and how they relate to the prospects for human security are explored next.

### ***Economic Issues***

The Sinjar province cannot support the previous employment levels, which existed before the genocide (Van Noonen & Wirya, 2017). Many Yazidis are internally displaced persons (IDPs), and finding jobs that cover necessary living expenses is difficult (U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). Discrimination in the Kurdistan region hampers Yazidis' ability to secure employment due in part to little formal education, lost documentation, and no experience in sectors other than construction and agriculture (U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Yazidis reported the highest levels of unemployment (46 percent) among minority groups in the Kurdistan region (IOM, 2019). Groups like Yazda, an NGO dedicated to the Yazidis, launched small programs in concert with USAID, but little progress for Yazidis is evident based on U.N. and IOM reports. Since much of the humanitarian aid for IDPs ended, the availability of food, shelter, and non-cash assistance means Yazidis continue to struggle for basic needs (IOM, 2019). IDPs residing outside of camps have even less access to services (U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). According to the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees (2019) report, there are several primary motives for Yazidis not returning to the Sinjar District. Among the most significant concerns were landmines in the area, a lack of security forces, and a damaged or destroyed house. The majority of Yazidis (74 percent) said safety was their biggest concern for not returning to Sinjar (U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019).

*Social Issues*

Social problems within and among Yazidis members and their neighbors present unique issues for recovery and security. A central tenet of the Yazidi's religion is honor and purity, as mentioned above. This practice places a double-edged sword on women struggling with the emotional trauma of rape and sexual slavery while facing ostracization from their community (Buffo & Allison, 2016; Vale, 2019; Zagoritou, 2019). Many of these women birthed children due to rape, and the Yazidi Spiritual Council initially decreed that these women, nor their children, could be allowed back into the community (Černý, 2020; Zagoritou, 2019). After pushback from most surviving Yazidis, the Council reversed course. The Council said women who were victims of rape would be allowed back, but not their children (A.P., 2019).

Unfortunately, this practice only serves as another obstacle to preventing community cohesion. Trauma is widespread throughout the community since the genocide. Children reported witnessing parents leave dead children behind during the genocide (Ceri et al., 2016). Now parents face the difficult decision to abandon their children again or face ex-communication.

Yazidi women struggle in more ways than just community ostracization. Like Holocaust survivors, transgenerational trauma is common (Kizilhan & Noll-Hussong, 2017). Major depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) rates are between 40 and 43 percent among women and children (Ibrahim et al., 2018). Social rejection reinforces the symptoms of psychological disorders, and only about nineteen percent of victims of rape, torture, and slavery received any form of psychological treatment or support (Ibrahim et al., 2018). This figure suggests an urgent need for psychological intervention, as noted by several studies (Ceri et al., 2016; Ibrahim et al., 2018). Children and adolescents make up a large part of this victim group, but Yazidi men who survived the genocide are an oft-overlooked demographic for mental health (Černý, 2020). The Yazidi social order revolves around castes, endogamy, and patriarchy

(Černý, 2020; Suvai, 2016). However, as Černý (2020) points out, traditional gender roles between males and females changed after the genocide. The emancipation of Yazidi women, forced by the genocide, is best known through the voice of Nadia Murad, a 2018 Noble Peace Prize winner and women's rights activist from the Yazidi community (Černý, 2020). In refugee and IDP camps, women faced new challenges for self-confidence and economic opportunities outside of the traditionally male-dominated society. Women's experiences in these camps, while not ideal, provided a network that developed skills, friendships, and confidence in their ability to lead more productive lives (Černý, 2020). However, women's progress had a somewhat deleterious effect on Yazidi men.

One of the most significant problems for Yazidi men stems from their inability to protect their women during the genocide. Frustration and anguish over the rape and torture of Yazidi women, compounded by global coverage of the genocide, only serves as a reminder that men's role as a protector failed (Černý, 2020). The U.N. also noted a new problem among Yazidis previously unheard of—sexually transmitted infections (U.N. Human Rights Council, 2016). Yazidi men feel emasculated, frustrated, and embarrassed by all this. There is evidence that Yazidi men blame the Kurdish Peshmerga, who promised to protect their villages and towns (Černý, 2020). The Yazidi also want to establish ethnic protection forces due to the Peshmerga failures to protect their community and reestablish their masculinity (Buffo & Allison, 2016). This evidence suggests that revenge attacks and instability will continue in the Sinjar region.

Yazidi culture holds family honor and reputation higher than individual lives. It is instructive to remember that Iraq remains highly tribal despite several large urban areas within the country. Blood feuds and revenge attacks are a part of the communal conflict in Iraq (Amnesty International, 2015; U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). Honor takes precedent over religion and ethnicity, but political and religious differences between Yazidis,

Shias, and Sunnis continue to be sources of instability in northern Iraq (U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). The genocide reordered economic, social, and symbolic capital for men while strengthening women's same categories (Černý, 2020). However, cultural capital remains firmly within the patriarchy for now. If Yazidi women can maintain their newly found empowerment, cultural attitudes for inclusion and reconciliation could change the balance of power within Yazidi society, increasing human security, and gender security.

### ***Political issues***

The Yazidis lack much political representation within Iraq, and the traditional power structures attempted to assimilate the Yazidis under two classes—Arab or Kurdish (Suvari, 2016; Van Shaack, 2018). Yazidis live in the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan, yet problems remain for this arrangement. The genocide affected Kurds' and Yazidis' relations to the extent Yazidis no longer trust the KRG government or their Arab neighbors in the region (Spät, 2018). This problem suggests that future ethnic conflicts are a distinct possibility, particularly in light of the evidence of the aforementioned social problems. Spät's (2018) research revealed that most Yazidis believe that allying themselves with the KRG presents better economic and political opportunities than remaining in "Arab" Iraq. However, many of the Sinjar Yazidis cling to one inescapable identity issues for politics: They are not Kurdish, they are Yazidis, the "people of the Peacock Angel" (Spät, 2018, p. 427). The insecurity in Iraq and the tensions between Baghdad and Erbil suggest this issue will continue to be a significant human security concern.

One crucial factor for Yazidis is the international recognition of the genocide or *ferman*. The Yazidis feel that recognition by the U.N. and the U.S. as a *gens* means that their status as a distinct ethnic group provides political power, rather than just a religious minority within the KRG (Spät, 2018). This reasoning makes good sense politically for the Yazidis as a way to provide for their defense and self-rule, allowing them out from under the distrust of Erbil and

Baghdad. The leader of the KRG, Nechirvan Barzani, remains ambiguous in his public statements about autonomy for Yazidis (as per Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution) while exploiting Yazidi children as political props, attempting to curry favor with Yazidis (Van Shaack, 2018; Zaman, 2020). Rebuilding interethnic ties in Sinjar requires that Yazidis have a strong voice in their political future. Recognition as a distinct group within Iraq and reconciliation efforts to bring the genocide criminals to justice are prerequisites for this challenge.

### **Shifting U.S. Foreign Policy**

The U.S. entry into Iraq in 2003 exposed many problems, some of them still evident today after years of brutal civil war and genocide in Iraq. The Bush administration's foreign policy, unilateral action (the Bush Doctrine) against terrorism, has given way to a more isolationist policy under the Trump administration (U.S. Department of Defense, 2018). Washington's current trends suggest that the U.S. reduced foreign aid for Yazidis and pulled away from a human security focus. Human security places the individual's rights over those of the nation, which contradicts state sovereignty norms (Kaplan, 2020; Paris, 2001; Roth, 2020; USDOS, 2020b). The Trump administration did provide an additional \$720 million for refugees affected by the civil war in Syria. Still, American interest in the Sinjar region is not what it was when H.R. 390, the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018, was signed (USAID, 2019; USAID, 2020). Statistics from the U.S. Agency for International Development suggest a low priority for enhancing security in areas affected by the Islamic State and reducing vulnerability in conflict-affected regions (USAID, n.d.). Iraq received \$285 million in total relief in 2019, while 2020 figures (not fully reported yet) show only \$20 million in targeted aid. Total disbursements by all U. S. aid agencies for Iraq dropped from \$111 million in 2019 to \$37

million in 2020 (USAID, n.d.). Again, the figures for 2020 are incomplete but suggest total aid is diminishing and targeted away from Yazidis and the Sinjar province.

One of the most troubling realizations is that the Yazidi case represents the first time Congress and the Executive branch agreed to recognize the crime of genocide. The passage of H.R. 390 into the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018 seems to have done little beyond its status as landmark legislation. The law, ostensibly presented to alleviate Christian and other minority groups suffering, falls short of providing that relief. In addition to the aid reduction mentioned above, the U.S. afforded a total of only 35 Yazidis immigration status between 2018 and 2020, representing just 3.4 percent of Iraqi immigration totals (USDOS, 2020a).<sup>2</sup> Ironically, Sunni Muslims represented over 40 percent of immigrants from Iraq, by far the largest group afforded asylum (USDOS, 2020a). It is instructive to remember that the Islamic State is a Sunni Muslim group and the second-largest religious group in Iraq after Shias. This statement is not to suggest that Sunnis who immigrated are members of the Islamic State. But, the fact that Yazidis make up the minority of immigrants is ironic given the historical significance of H.R. 390. Furthermore, one-quarter of the 450,000 displaced persons in the Sinjar region, mainly Yazidis, wish to leave the country (Vine et al., 2020). This data suggest that more work is needed to help Yazidis immigrate.

Republicans attempted prioritizing Yezidi and Christian immigration in 2015 but failed to garner any support beyond the eleven Republican cosponsors of H. R. 4017, the Save Christians from Genocide Act of 2015. H.R. 4017 identified “Christians and Yazidis in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Iran, and Libya [as] targets of genocide, and to provide for the expedited processing of immigrant and refugee visas for such individuals, and for other purposes” (H.R. 4017, 2015). The Trump administration froze immigration from the Middle East in 2017 and reduced total

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<sup>2</sup> For complete immigration numbers see Table 1.

immigration levels from all regions to a maximum of 18,000 persons per year (Krogstad, 2019). Limited immigration by Yazidis does not necessarily amount to marginalization. The lack of immigration may stem from a reluctance to leave their homeland. Still, the spirit and text of H.R. 390 were “to provide relief for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes who are members of religious and ethnic minority groups in Iraq and Syria, for accountability for perpetrators of these crimes, and for *other* purposes” (emphasis added) (H.R. 390, 2018). The hollowness of the United States’ first declaration of genocide is visible in its deeds and actions. The lack of support leaves the Yazidis vulnerable.

It comes as no surprise that American interest in Iraq’s affairs is dwindling after seventeen years of conflict. Plans are moving forward under the current administration for removing more troops from Iraq and Syria as U.S. foreign policy redirects toward great power conflicts away from nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan (U.S. Department of Defense, 2018). The latest National Defense Strategy from the Trump administration and his public statements about “endless wars” in the Middle East confirms the same thing (Quinn, 2020). What this foreign policy shift means for the Yazidis is still unclear. Yet, in light of the previous sections highlighting the various insecurities and challenges, much of the remaining work will fall on NGOs and other relief organizations as the U.S. focuses attention on China and Russia. The fact that Yazidis and other Christian groups lack priority immigration status only underscores the depth of H.R. 390’s failures. In light of the massive amount of displacement caused by U.S. wars in the region, there is precedent for prioritizing immigration and maintaining robust aid levels (Vine et al., 2020).

### **Reconciliation and Prosecution of Genocidaires**

The Yazidi genocide’s recognition represents the first and only time the United States Congress and Executive branches acknowledged a genocide since the U.N. passage of the

Genocide Convention after World War II (H.R. 379, 2017; H.R. 390, 2018; U.N. Human Rights Council, 2016). This fact is significant for both Yazidi recognition and political capital in Iraq. The U.N. passed Security Council Resolution 2379 in 2017 as a pathway for reconciliation and holding members of the Islamic State responsible for war crimes and genocide. The U.N. also created the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by the Islamic State (UNITAD) to further these goals (U.N. Human Rights Council, 2016). The current political impasse between Erbil and Baghdad about autonomy for the Kurdish region is hampering this process.

The current Iraqi legal system lacks the mechanisms to prosecute war crimes as defined by Security Council Resolution 2379 (Van Shaack, 2018). Van Shaack (2018) highlights in her work that the international community perceives the Iraqi High Tribunal as ineffective and flawed. Iraq currently lacks specific legal verbiage for prosecuting genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, nor is Iraq a signatory of the Rome Statute (Van Shaack, 2018). Baghdad's and the U. N.'s focus on the Islamic State marginalizes the prosecution of other groups who committed atrocities in Iraq, such as government forces and militias. The KRG established a select investigative committee that deals with genocide and cataloging mass graves, but underfunding affects this program according to the U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq (Van Shaack, 2018). The KRG has not prosecuted any specific crimes against the Yazidis yet—only crimes for terrorism. This practice undermines human security in favor of state security and leaves little hope for reconciliation and healing.

Another complication for Yazidis is Iraq's definition of rape, which does not meet current international standards (Van Shaack, 2018). If a rape suspect marries his victim, this vacates the rape charges even if a conviction already exists (Iraqi Penal Code, Chap. 9, § 1, Art. 398, 1969, p. 73). Further complicating rape prosecutions is the three-year statute of limitations present in

Article 398. Now that the genocide is more than three years old prosecuting Islamic State members in Iraq for crimes against humanity, like rape, will be untenable. With the security situation in Iraq deteriorating and the imminent departure of U.S. forces, there is little hope for trials that help the Yazidis receive compensation or justice. The prognosis is not all pessimistic. Progress is being made in several areas for the Yazidis.

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is actively working for reconciliation and conflict resolution in Iraq through its Alliance of Iraqi Minorities (AIM) initiative. AIM's work helped achieve the first recognition ever for religious minorities in national textbooks by Iraq's Education Ministry (USIP, 2020). AIM also advocates for a community-based approach for reparations to minority communities affected by the Islamic State, helping displaced minorities return to northern Iraq. AIM instituted community-based participation for budget committees designed to give minorities a chance to prioritize budgetary commitments for their districts in the Kurdistan region (Levkowitz & Khalid, 2020). Community-based solutions for conflict resolution provide meaning dialogues and inclusiveness activities designed to prevent recidivism into conflict, such as revenge and honor killings mentioned previously.

### **Conclusion**

This paper examined the pressing human security situation in northern Iraq and the Yazidis' lack of support despite widespread attention for the genocide. The psychological trauma inflicted on women by the Islamic State continues today through the genocide survivors' ostracization. The psychological effects of the genocide on men show that mental health care is a priority for all regardless of gender. The reordering of the Yazidi social order suggests there are deeper problems than just mental health. Women want an inclusive and expanded role in the economic and social affairs of their society. This process will require the continuing work of organizations like Yazda, which advocates for reconciliation, mass grave identification, and

helps host America's largest diaspora for Yazidis (Yazda, n.d.). As previously noted, the United States Institute for Peace is another critical organization working to resolve Iraq's many problems.

The U.N. must also address the cultural destruction in Iraq if a renewed and more secure Yazidi community is a reality, as some authors highlight (Blake, 2011; Van Noonen & Wirya, 2017). Yazidis' cultural rights are significantly necessary because of the oral tradition within the religion for learning customs and religious dogma (Spät, 2018; Suvari, 2016; U.N. Human Rights Council, 2018). The U.N. claims progress in investigating and prosecuting the genocide but maintains that international support for the Yazidis is critical for continued success (U.N. News, 2020a; U.N. News, 2020b). The lack of continued support from the U.S. and evaporating foreign aid means other nations and organizations need to step in. The Sinjar Foundation for Human Development (SFHD) and the Free Yazidi Foundation (FYF) are two such organizations. The SFHD and FYF work and advocate through civil society organizations in Iraq to help individuals develop social skill sets. The SFHD and FYF focus on empowering women socially, economically, and psychologically, but dedicate their work to ensure gender security for all (FYF; n.d.; SFHD, n.d.). These groups play an essential role in realizing future human security needs in Sinjar.

Iraq's lack of a compatible legal system for prosecuting war crimes presents a more troubling dilemma. As addressed above, criminal prosecutions focus on terrorism over other types of crimes against humanity, which marginalizes the Yazidi case for justice (Van Shaack, 2018). This paper's opinion is that Iraq should ratify the Rome Statute and allow the international community to prosecute the genocidaires. While debatable, Iraq's classification as a failed state emphasizes the unlikelihood for real criminal justice reform while a general state of instability exists (Abu Zeed, 2020; Cordesman, 2020; Cordesman & Molot, 2019). This prospect

suggests that human security in Iraq's post-conflict setting is unattainable while instability still plagues the region. On September 30, 2020, new attacks occurred in Baghdad and the Kurdistan region where the Yazidis reside (Abu Zeed, 2020). The threat of American diplomatic withdrawal resulted in increased attacks against U.S. interests. The majority Shia popular leader Muqtada al-Sadr called for a stop to attacks against Iraq's cultural and diplomatic sites (Abu Zeed, 2020). Iraq faced numerous political protests over the summer, and the current pandemic stressors on Iraq's economy only increase the likelihood of more insecurity in the near future.

Iraq represents a complex amalgamation of different ethnicities and religions. There are no easy solutions for reconciliation in Iraq, but the U.S. must continue to support the Yazidis in deeds, not just words. Prioritizing immigration (via H.R. 4017) for willing refugees is an excellent first step. Maintaining important infrastructure rehabilitation projects for schools, electrical grids, and water networks is also crucial for recovery (USDOS, 2019). The U.S. must also maintain a strong commitment to protecting human rights *and* human security by emphasizing the spirit and language of H.R. 390 through continued development and humanitarian aid packages for Yazidis. The government of Iraq is proposing new legislation aimed at the Yazidis recovery. The Yazidi Female Survivor's Bill, designed to bring relief for those abducted by the Islamic State, has yet to pass parliament (Kingstone, 2020). The Yazda organization expressed the significance of this bill, saying, "this is the most significant piece of legislation ever with respect to the Yazidis in Iraq to be discussed within the framework for Iraq" (Yazda quoted in Kingstone, 2020, para. 3). If successful, this legislation will help heal the genocide's wounds, but the trauma of the *ferman* will live on through the generations. The Yazidi situation is an area that deserves further study and attention in the future.

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**Table 1**

Adopted from: U.S. Department of State: Board of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2020

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|                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Department of State</i>                              |
| <i>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</i>    |
| <i>Office of Admissions - Refugee Processing Center</i> |
| <i>Demographical Profile of Refugee Arrivals</i>        |
| <i>Calendar Year</i>                                    |
| <i>Iraq</i>                                             |
| <i>as of 30-September-2020</i>                          |

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**Arrivals by Demographic**

| <b>Report Start Date:</b> | 1-June-2018       |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|---------|
| <b>Report End Date:</b>   | 30-September-2020 |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
| Characteristic            | CY 2018           |           |           | CY 2019    |            |            | CY 2020    |            |            | Cumulative Total | % Total |
|                           | F                 | M         | Total     | F          | M          | Total      | F          | M          | Total      |                  |         |
| Under 14                  | 3                 | 3         | 6         | 41         | 51         | 92         | 56         | 72         | 128        | 226              | 21.96%  |
| Age 14 to 20              | 0                 | 0         | 0         | 13         | 22         | 35         | 21         | 29         | 50         | 85               | 8.26%   |
| Age 21 to 30              | 1                 | 0         | 1         | 30         | 54         | 84         | 28         | 36         | 64         | 149              | 14.48%  |
| Age 31 to 40              | 1                 | 1         | 2         | 32         | 31         | 63         | 48         | 56         | 104        | 169              | 16.42%  |
| Age 41 to 50              | 0                 | 0         | 0         | 19         | 26         | 45         | 24         | 36         | 60         | 105              | 10.20%  |
| Age 51 to 64              | 13                | 5         | 18        | 59         | 48         | 107        | 14         | 20         | 34         | 159              | 15.45%  |
| Age 65 and Over           | 17                | 11        | 28        | 49         | 38         | 87         | 14         | 7          | 21         | 136              | 13.22%  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>35</b>         | <b>20</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>243</b> | <b>270</b> | <b>513</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>256</b> | <b>461</b> | <b>1,029</b>     |         |

Data prior to 2002 was migrated into WRAPS from a legacy system therefore we have more confidence in post-2002 data.

Based on the terms of a settlement in *Doe et al. v. Trump et al.*, No. 17-0178 (W.D. Wash), certain refugee applicants that arrive in FY 2020 and any future fiscal years are counted toward the FY 2018 refugee admissions ceiling.

## Arrivals by Religion

| Report Start Date: 1-June-2018     |         |    |       |         |     |       |         |     |       |                  |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|----|-------|---------|-----|-------|---------|-----|-------|------------------|---------|
| Report End Date: 30-September-2020 |         |    |       |         |     |       |         |     |       |                  |         |
| Religion                           | CY 2018 |    |       | CY 2019 |     |       | CY 2020 |     |       | Cumulative Total | % Total |
|                                    | F       | M  | Total | F       | M   | Total | F       | M   | Total |                  |         |
| Atheist                            | 0       | 0  | 0     | 0       | 1   | 1     | 0       | 0   | 0     | 1                | 0.10%   |
| Catholic                           | 2       | 1  | 3     | 13      | 8   | 21    | 19      | 21  | 40    | 64               | 6.22%   |
| Chaldean                           | 0       | 0  | 0     | 3       | 0   | 3     | 2       | 2   | 4     | 7                | 0.68%   |
| Christian                          | 2       | 1  | 3     | 26      | 32  | 58    | 13      | 23  | 36    | 97               | 9.43%   |
| Evangelical Christian              | 0       | 0  | 0     | 0       | 0   | 0     | 0       | 1   | 1     | 1                | 0.10%   |
| Moslem                             | 3       | 1  | 4     | 57      | 78  | 135   | 7       | 9   | 16    | 155              | 15.06%  |
| Moslem Shiite                      | 9       | 4  | 13    | 52      | 49  | 101   | 42      | 48  | 90    | 204              | 19.83%  |
| Moslem Suni                        | 10      | 8  | 18    | 69      | 81  | 150   | 106     | 139 | 245   | 413              | 40.14%  |
| No Religion                        | 0       | 0  | 0     | 0       | 0   | 0     | 0       | 1   | 1     | 1                | 0.10%   |
| Oriental Orthodoxy                 | 0       | 0  | 0     | 0       | 0   | 0     | 1       | 1   | 2     | 2                | 0.19%   |
| Orthodox                           | 4       | 1  | 5     | 13      | 12  | 25    | 8       | 7   | 15    | 45               | 4.37%   |
| Sabeans-Mandean                    | 1       | 1  | 2     | 0       | 1   | 1     | 1       | 0   | 1     | 4                | 0.39%   |
| Yezidi                             | 4       | 3  | 7     | 10      | 8   | 18    | 6       | 4   | 10    | 35               | 3.40%   |
| Total                              | 35      | 20 | 55    | 243     | 270 | 513   | 205     | 256 | 461   | 1,029            |         |

Data prior to 2002 was migrated into WRAPS from a legacy system therefore we have more confidence in post-2002 data.

Based on the terms of a settlement in *Doe et al. v. Trump et al.*, No. 17-0178 (W.D. Wash), certain refugee applicants that arrive in FY 2020 and any future fiscal years are counted toward the FY 2018 refugee admissions ceiling.

**Arrivals by Ethnicity**

| <b>Report Start Date:</b> 1-June-2018     |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|---------|
| <b>Report End Date:</b> 30-September-2020 |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
| Ethnicity                                 | CY 2018   |           |           | CY 2019    |            |            | CY 2020    |            |            | Cumulative Total | % Total |
|                                           | F         | M         | Total     | F          | M          | Total      | F          | M          | Total      |                  |         |
| Arab                                      | 24        | 14        | 38        | 173        | 207        | 380        | 147        | 192        | 339        | 757              | 73.57%  |
| Armenian                                  | 1         | 0         | 1         | 2          | 1          | 3          | 1          | 1          | 2          | 6                | 0.58%   |
| Assyrian                                  | 1         | 0         | 1         | 19         | 16         | 35         | 4          | 6          | 10         | 46               | 4.47%   |
| Chaldean                                  | 3         | 2         | 5         | 16         | 14         | 30         | 18         | 20         | 38         | 73               | 7.09%   |
| Iraqi                                     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 2          | 5          | 7          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 7                | 0.68%   |
| Kurd                                      | 4         | 3         | 7         | 18         | 17         | 35         | 17         | 15         | 32         | 74               | 7.19%   |
| Siryac                                    | 2         | 1         | 3         | 13         | 10         | 23         | 18         | 22         | 40         | 66               | 6.41%   |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>35</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>243</b> | <b>270</b> | <b>513</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>256</b> | <b>461</b> | <b>1,029</b>     |         |

Data prior to 2002 was migrated into WRAPS from a legacy system therefore we have more confidence in post-2002 data.

Based on the terms of a settlement in *Doe et al. v. Trump et al.*, No. 17-0178 (W.D. Wash), certain refugee applicants that arrive in FY 2020 and any future fiscal years are counted toward the FY 2018 refugee admissions ceiling.

### Arrivals by Highest Education Level

| <b>Report Start Date:</b> 1-June-2018<br><b>Report End Date:</b> 30-September-2020 |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|---------|
| Education                                                                          | CY 2018   |           |           | CY 2019    |            |            | CY 2020    |            |            | Cumulative Total | % Total |
|                                                                                    | F         | M         | Total     | F          | M          | Total      | F          | M          | Total      |                  |         |
| Bio Data not Complete                                                              | 12        | 1         | 13        | 50         | 42         | 92         | 47         | 47         | 94         | 199              | 19.34%  |
| Graduate School                                                                    | 0         | 1         | 1         | 2          | 3          | 5          | 2          | 1          | 3          | 9                | 0.87%   |
| Intermediate                                                                       | 4         | 2         | 6         | 32         | 44         | 76         | 23         | 50         | 73         | 155              | 15.06%  |
| Kindergarten                                                                       | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          | 2          | 3          | 1          | 2          | 3          | 6                | 0.58%   |
| Pre-University                                                                     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 2          | 2                | 0.19%   |
| Primary                                                                            | 7         | 4         | 11        | 44         | 52         | 96         | 53         | 59         | 112        | 219              | 21.28%  |
| Professional                                                                       | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          | 3          | 4          | 0          | 2          | 2          | 6                | 0.58%   |
| Secondary                                                                          | 4         | 6         | 10        | 36         | 50         | 86         | 31         | 44         | 75         | 171              | 16.62%  |
| Technical School                                                                   | 4         | 3         | 7         | 15         | 18         | 33         | 13         | 18         | 31         | 71               | 6.90%   |
| University/College                                                                 | 4         | 3         | 7         | 62         | 56         | 118        | 33         | 32         | 65         | 190              | 18.46%  |
| Unknown                                                                            | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 1          | 1                | 0.10%   |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                       | <b>35</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>243</b> | <b>270</b> | <b>513</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>256</b> | <b>461</b> | <b>1,029</b>     |         |

Data prior to 2002 was migrated into WRAPS from a legacy system therefore we have more confidence in post-2002 data.

Based on the terms of a settlement in *Doe et al. v. Trump et al.*, No. 17-0178 (W.D. Wash), certain refugee applicants that arrive in FY 2020 and any future fiscal years are counted toward the FY 2018 refugee admissions ceiling.

**Arrivals by Native Language**

| <b>Report Start Date:</b> 1-June-2018     |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|---------|
| <b>Report End Date:</b> 30-September-2020 |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |         |
| Language                                  | CY 2018   |           |           | CY 2019    |            |            | CY 2020    |            |            | Cumulative Total | % Total |
|                                           | F         | M         | Total     | F          | M          | Total      | F          | M          | Total      |                  |         |
| Arabic                                    | 27        | 16        | 43        | 197        | 234        | 431        | 162        | 209        | 371        | 845              | 82.12%  |
| Armenian                                  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          | 1          | 2          | 1          | 1          | 2          | 4                | 0.39%   |
| Assyrian                                  | 2         | 0         | 2         | 17         | 12         | 29         | 1          | 6          | 7          | 38               | 3.69%   |
| Behdini                                   | 0         | 0         | 0         | 2          | 2          | 4          | 3          | 4          | 7          | 11               | 1.07%   |
| Chaldean                                  | 1         | 0         | 1         | 11         | 9          | 20         | 16         | 13         | 29         | 50               | 4.86%   |
| English                                   | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                | 0.10%   |
| Farsi                                     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                | 0.10%   |
| Kurdi                                     | 1         | 0         | 1         | 10         | 9          | 19         | 14         | 9          | 23         | 43               | 4.18%   |
| Kurmanji                                  | 3         | 3         | 6         | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 6                | 0.58%   |
| Other Minor Languages                     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 2          | 2                | 0.19%   |
| Siryac                                    | 1         | 1         | 2         | 3          | 2          | 5          | 7          | 12         | 19         | 26               | 2.53%   |
| Sorani                                    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 2                | 0.19%   |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>35</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>243</b> | <b>270</b> | <b>513</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>256</b> | <b>461</b> | <b>1,029</b>     |         |

Data prior to 2002 was migrated into WRAPS from a legacy system therefore we have more confidence in post-2002 data.

Based on the terms of a settlement in *Doe et al. v. Trump et al.*, No. 17-0178 (W.D. Wash), certain refugee applicants that arrive in FY 2020 and any future fiscal years are counted toward the FY 2018 refugee admissions ceiling.