

# **YAZIDI REFUGEES IN TURKEY AND SYRIA SEEK LEGAL ADMISSION TO THIRD COUNTRIES VIA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS**



**Yazda is a Non-Profit Global Organization established to support  
the victims of Yazidi Genocide**

**[www.Yazda.org](http://www.Yazda.org)**

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## Introduction

The Yazidi community is most appreciative for the supportive action taken by Western nations in response to the genocidal attack perpetrated by ISIS in August 2014. Yazidis faced the most devastating attack of the 21st century when the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIS) targeted them last year with the intent of extermination <sup>[1][a][b][c][d]</sup>. Thousands of defenseless Yazidi civilians found themselves trapped on Mount Sinjar where they faced horrific conditions.

ISIL considers the Yazidis as infidels – so called *Mushrkiin* or devil-worshippers and on this basis, attacked them in their houses in Sinjar, killing men and elders. ISIL then abducted the women and children. The females including young girls were trafficked sex slaves or gifted to ISIL commanders, while young males were sent to camps being forced to convert to Islam, indoctrinated with ISIL's extremist views and given military training. Those who refused or resisted were killed. By removing the entire Yazidi population from their homeland, inflicting the mental and bodily harm of sexual violence to the women and young girls ISIL ensured that they would not be able to go back to their communities. By forcing the young males to change their religion and to become ISIL fighters, ISIL sought to annihilate the religious identity, traditions and the very existence of the Yazidis. During the attack on the Nineveh Plains, ISIL also destroyed 19 Yazidi religious holy places. Yazda estimates ISIS killed 3000, enslaved 5,000-7,000, mostly women and children, and forcefully displaced 400,000 Yazidis (90 percent of the entire Yazidi population in Iraq). More than 3,000 women and children remain in captivity.

The Yazidis, who account for less than three percent of Iraq's population were single out by ISIS and thousands of radical members of neighboring Muslim tribes whom Yazidis coexisted with for centuries. Iraq and Syrian minorities have all been subject of great suffering on the hands of the radical groups, Yazidi are probably the most affect group. While the turmoil in Syria and Iraq has resulted in mass displacement of civilians in both countries, the Yazidi remain one of the most vulnerable, underserved communities. Immigration Authorities has not addressed the crisis of Yazidi refugees in Turkey and Syria, and since August of last year only a dozen of Yazidis have managed to migrate to safer countries through legal immigration paths set by the UNHCR.

Given the history of persecution against the Yazidi people and the conditions in which they live in in the camps in Turkey and Syria, we believe that a quota should be allocated for

Yazidis under refugee resettlement programs.

Yazda submits this report, on behalf of approximately 16,376 Yazidi refugees currently displaced to Turkey and Syria, to countries that agreed to resettle refugees from Turkey and Syria; and request that a quota is to be granted to Yazidi refugees and their petition through UNHCR be expedited. Yazda also urge EU members, USA, Canada and Australia to grant Yazidis refugees priority in their immigration scheme and prompt Yazidis refugees' interviews who registered with UNHCR since many Yazidis interviews has been delayed as far as 2022.

Conditions in Kurdistan territories of Turkey for the Yazidis have been worsening further in the aftermath of the military conflict in Southeast of Turkey between Turks and the Kurds. On September 30, 2015, a large Turkish force (some five thousand Turkish soldiers) established a military base inside Nusaybin Refugee camp, a camp that houses some three thousands Yazidi refugees, such action and other warfare's actions near the four major Yazidi Refugee camps put Yazidi refugees' lives at further greater danger.

### **Humanitarian situation of Yazidi refugees in Turkey and Syria:**

Yazda estimates that 11,000 and 5375 Yazidis refugees are currently displaced to Turkey and Syria, respectively. Within those, there are victims of ISIS, orphans, widows, and people with special needs. The majority of these people have registered with UNHCR in both countries. However, small percentages could not register with UNHCR as they have no money to travel to the UN office located very far from the camps (20-26 hours by bus). Full statistics including the UNHCR number for each individual are available upon request.

Yazidis IDPs who are in Kurdistan Territories of Syria and Turkey face many challenges their future is unknown. In the camps, children have no access to education, health care is not provided or insufficient, and humanitarian aid provided is insufficient. Camps in both countries lack adequate shelter, running water, toilets, and food.

Moreover, UNHCR interviews for the majority of Yazidis in Turkey and Syria has set up for 2022, which is unbelievable. This has resulted that the Yazidis are being very disappointed and feel forgotten by the international community.

## The ongoing genocide of the Yazidi minority:

The Yazidi genocide has been widely documented; important entities and countries have labeled atrocities committed against Yazidis as possible or attempted genocide, crimes of war, and crimes against humanity.

*"What was clear to us was that there was an intent to destroy the Yazidi population...and that's why we say genocide may have been perpetrated."* said Suki Nagra of the United Nations (UN) in a press release in March 2015.<sup>[2]</sup>

The same UN report on 19 March 2015 succinctly highlighted the genocide issue stating "IS suspected of genocide against Yazidis in Iraq" UN panel: Group says pattern of attacks points to intention to destroy minority as a group.

*"First-hand accounts from internally displaced persons and refugees, some of whom I met during my visit to the Middle East in April, confirm systematic sexual violence, particularly against Yazidi women and children aged between eight and 35 years."* Said Zainab Bangura, the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict on the anniversary of this attack.<sup>[3]</sup>

Bangura added, *"Young women are being "sold" in open markets, gifted to foreign fighters, trafficked for sex in the region to raise funds and increase recruitment among ISIS's ranks. Women and girls are also used for forced procreation, to populate the desired new Caliphate with children who can be raised in ISIS's own warped image."*

Yazda and its partners are collaborating with the former chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court (ICC) Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo to pursue International Criminal Court to open investigation into the "ongoing genocide" against Iraq's Yazidi community at the hands of Islamic State militants.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Who are the Yazidis

Yazidism are considered one of oldest religions in the Middle East with history of 3000-4000 years. Throughout their history, Yazidis have been a subject of 73-genocidal campaigns by fundamentalists.

Estimates put the global number of Yazidis at around 700,000 people, with the vast majority of them concentrated in northern Iraq (Kurdistan Region of Iraq), in and around Sinjar and in the Nineveh Plains, Yazidis are one of Ancient people in Mesopotamia, and at the core of their marginalization is their worship of the angel Melek Tawwus, or Peacock Angel, one of

the seven angels that take primacy in their beliefs.

In their recent history, and under the rule of Ba'ath regime, Yazidis remained persecuted. Ba'ath regime violations against Yazidi rights included forceful resettlement in compounds in Sinjar district and Nineveh plain, confiscation of Yazidi property, prohibition from working in a government and/or military positions, and systematic killing and imprisoning of Yazidi activists.

### **Why Yazidis are fleeing from Iraq**

The Yazidis were among the first groups in Iraq who welcomed regime change and participated strongly in building a new Iraq. Many Yazidis joined Iraqi and Kurdistan security forces in their regions and beyond. The change in Iraq and relative peace in Yazidi territories led to important economic development and transition from a peasant society to a modern society. Over the past 11 years, Yazidis were among the most successful groups who took advantage in freedom of trade and open market in Kurdistan region and Iraq. Yazidi territories enjoyed relative peace between 2003 and 2007.

From 2003, Yazidis targeted individually and collectively by various radical groups:

- On February 15 2007, Extremists in Sheikhan waged a massive attack on Yazidi supreme religious leaders and Yazidi temples in Shikhan. Perpetrators were never put on trial for the attack.
- On April 22, 2007, Al-Qaida Terrorists group killed 24 Yazidi workers nearby Mosul, Perpetrators were never put on trial for the attack.
- On August 14 2007, Al-Qaida terrorist organization attacked two Yazidi towns in Sinjar and killed nearly a thousand Yazidi civilians. Local jihadists from Baaj and Sinjar planned and executed the attack.
- Between 2003 and 2014, of Yazidis were killed in isolated incidents in Iraq. (more information will be submitted on request)
- On August 2<sup>nd</sup> the whole Yazidi community in Iraq is collectively targeted by ISIS and thousands of members of some of the neighbouring Muslim tribes who conducted a planned and an organised genocide against Yazidis and aimed to annihilate Yazidi identity and culture.
- Over the past decades, dozens of Yazidi girls and children have been kidnaped by

Muslim men, a 12-year-old Yazidi girl named Simon and a 13 year old Yazidi student, named Lamia are two of tens of examples and perpetrators where not brought to justice.

Yazidis are not treated equally under the Iraqi legal system; the Iraqi laws deny the equal power of testimony and equal rights for Yazidis in the courts. A Yazidis testimony is considered unaccepted because the legal system considers Yazidis as not “people of a book”. Yazidis are treated as a third class citizen and historically been challenged to move up the social and political ladders.

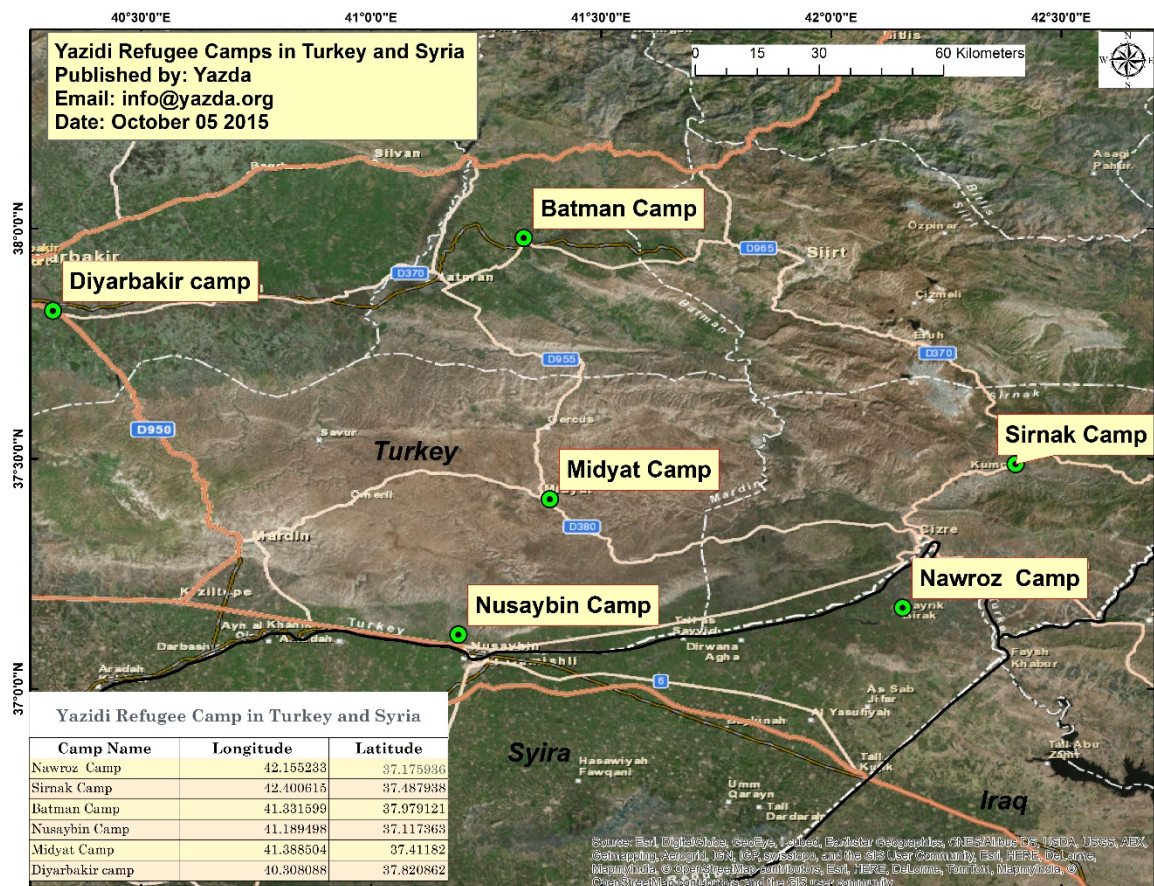
Politically Yazidis find no space or rights of equality in the political system of Kurdistan Region or Iraq. Although Yazidis are eligible to vote, their votes are often manipulated to weaken their voices.



## Summary of Yazidis Refugee Camps in Turkey and Syria

Yazidi refugees' community Southeast of Turkey are distributed in eight refugee camps (see table below) with total population of 11,270. Condition inside the camps in Turkey have worsened over the past few weeks due to the military conflict in the region. In Syria, Yazidi refugees are mainly concentrated in Nawroz camp with total population of 5,373. Camps locations are showing on the map.

Camp Name	Longitude	Latitude	# of Refugees
Nawroz Camp	42.155233	37.175936	5,373
Sirnak Camp	42.400615	37.487938	950
Batman Camp	41.331599	37.979121	550
Nusaybin Camp	41.189498	37.117363	4,000
Midyat Camp	41.388504	37.41182	2,040
Diyarbakir camp	40.308088	37.820862	3,200
Serte camp	-	-	290
Whiranshire Camp	-	-	240
<b>Total</b>			<b>16,643</b>





## Brief on Refugees Camps:

1. **Midyat camp/ Turkey:** there are 190 families or 2040 Yazidi individuals in this camp



2. **Diyarbakir camp/ Turkey:** 3200 Yazidis are living in this camp. Yazidis in this camp attempted to make a trip in mass migration toward the Bulgarian border by foot and were later beaten by Turkish police (jundarma) and forcibly returned to the camps





3. **Nusaybin Camp/ Turkey:** There are 4000 Yazidi individuals living in this camp. This is the camp which is now occupied by the 5000 Turkish soldiers who are planning for attacks on PKK



4. **Qargokh Camp in Batman/ Turkey:** 550 Yazidi individuals are living in this camp.



5. **Shernakh camp/ Turkey:** 950 Yazidi individuals are living in this camp



6. **Serty camp/ Turkey:** There are 290 Yazidis who are living in this camp.
7. **Weran Shar camp/ Turkey:** 240 Yazidis are living in this camp.
8. **Camp Nawroz/ Derek Hasaka/ Syria:** 5373 Yazidi individuals are living in critical conditions.







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**About Yazda:**

Yazda is a US-based, 501 (c) (3) Non-profit global Yazidi organization, established to support the Yazidi religious minority group globally in the aftermath August 2014 genocidal campaign, committed by the so-called “Islamic State”. Yazda currently operates offices in USA, Iraq and United Kingdom.

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