

# **Yazidi Refugees in Greece,Turkey, Syria and Iraq seek legal admission to Germany**



**Yazda is a Non-Profit Global Organization established to support  
the victims of the 74th Yazidi Genocide**

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

**August 2016**

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## Introduction

The Yazidi community faced one of the most devastating attack of the 21st century when the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) targeted them on 3 August 2014 with the intent of total extermination <sup>[1][a][b][c][d]</sup>. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis had to flee for their lives and ten of thousands of defenseless Yazidi civilians found themselves trapped on Mount Sinjar where they faced horrific conditions.



*August 3rd, 2016, Yazidis gathered in Berlin on the second anniversary of Yazidi genocide by ISIS terrorists*

Extremist groups, including ISIS, consider Yazidis as infidels – [so called \*Kafir\* or devil-worshippers](#), and on this basis, ISIS attacked Yazidis in their homes in Sinjar. Before attacking Yazidis the so-called Islamic State declared in their online magazine, [Dabiq](#) in October 2014 that they referred the Yazidi issue to some of their

'religious scholars' for a decision as to what should be done with them. According to [Dabiq](#), [ISIS 'scholars'](#) decided that Yazidis are infidels, [Kafir](#) and need to be eradicated [7,9]. In the first hours of the attack, ISIS started murdering men, male teenagers and elders and abducting the women and children. The Yazidi women, including prepubescent girls, were then trafficked as sex slaves, [Sabaia](#), or were given to ISIS commanders for this purpose, while the boys were sent to camps to be forced to convert to Islam, indoctrinated with ISIS's extremist views and given military training. Those who refused or resisted were killed. By driving the entire Yazidi population from their homeland, massacring men, inflicting the psychological and physical trauma of sexual violence on the women and young girls, forcing boys to change their religion and to become ISIS fighters ISIS sought the complete annihilation of the religious identity, traditions and very existence of the Yazidi people. During the attack on the Nineveh Plains, ISIS also destroyed and desecrated 42 Yazidi religious holy shrines and cemeteries. Yazda estimates that ISIS killed about 5,000 people, [enslaved 5,000-7,000](#) [8] mostly women and children and forcefully displaced 400,000 Yazidis (90% of the entire Yazidis population in Iraq). As of today more than 3,200 women and children remain in captivity.

Yazidis, who account for less than 3% of Iraq's population, are the only group to be singled out for genocide by ISIS and thousands of other radical members of neighboring Muslim tribes whom Yazidis coexisted with for centuries. This is because ISIS consider Yazidis *people of [non book or devil worshippers](#)*. Yazidis have suffered proportionately more than any other group in Iraq and Syria. While the turmoil in Syria and Iraq has resulted in mass displacement of civilians in both countries, the Yazidis remain the most vulnerable, isolated and endangered community. Immigration authorities in western countries have not addressed the unique crisis faced by Yazidi refugees in Turkey, Greece, and Syria. Since August 2014 only a dozen or so Yazidis have managed to migrate to safer countries through the legal immigration process controlled by the UNHCR.

Given the history of persecution and the genocidal attack against the Yazidi




people and the conditions in which they live in Turkey, Greece, and Syria, Yazidis believe that a quota should be allocated for them by Germany under its refugee resettlement programs and the United Nations immigration scheme.



*August, 3rd, 2016. peaceful demonstration by Yazidis on the second anniversary of Yazidi genocide.*

In addition, 2000 former ISIS captives, mainly women and children, who managed to escape from ISIS captivity are now living in miserable conditions and are in need of rehabilitation and psychological treatment that are not available in Iraq, Syria or neighbouring countries. Yazda submits this report on behalf of approximately 10.000 Yazidi refugees currently displaced in Greece, Turkey and Syria, to the countries, including Germany. This report based on the Yazidis conditions in the three mentioned countries, requests that a quota be granted to Yazidi refugees in view of the genocide faced by this community and that their asylum applications through UNHCR be expedited. Yazda also urges the governments of Germany, Canada, Europe, the USA, and Australia to award Yazidis refugees

priority in their immigration programs and that there be prompt interviews for Yazidi refugees who registered with UNHCR because many Yazidis interviews has been deferred to 2022. To explain this more, the picture below is the UNHCR for for a Yazidi child called **Afiyah Zidan Khudida**, who was just 2 years old when she registered with UNHCR on 12th of November 2014. As can be seen from the document, it will take UNHCR 22 Feb 2022 or over **7 years** to process Afiyah's application .

 **UNHCR**  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés  
BMMYK Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği Sancak Mah. Tiflis Cad. 552. Sokak No3 06550 Ankara  
Tel: (312) 409 7000A Fax (312) 441 2173A Email asamturan@unhcr.org

S/N: 10204541414V3783320141112 Date of Issue (Veriliş Tarihi): 12/11/2014


Name of Applicant (Başvuru sahibinin Adı): **AFIYAH ZAIDAN KHUDIDA BARJAS**

Date of Birth (Doğum Tarihi): **20/12/2012**

Place of Birth (Doğum Yeri): **Nineveh**

Nationality (Uyruğu): **Iraq**

Governorate of (valilik): **MARDIN**



We hereby confirm that **Iraq** national, Mr./Ms **AFIYAH ZAIDAN KHUDIDA BARJAS** would like to lodge an asylum claim in Turkey.

UNHCR has established contact with the Foreigners, Border and Asylum Department of the General Directorate of Security in Ankara, and thereupon, has advised the applicant – and his/her dependants – to approach the Foreigners Branch of the Governorate of ( **MARDIN** ) to register the asylum claim with the Turkish authorities.

In line with the Regulation No. 94/6169 and the Implementation Directive No. 57, the asylum application of the applicant shall be received, without delay, by the Foreigners Branch of the relevant province. UNHCR Office in Ankara will complete the registration process of the applicant and assign him/her a regular UNHCR file number on ( **28.02.2022** ).

İşbu belge ile, **Iraq** uyruklu, Bay/ Bayan **AFIYAH ZAIDAN KHUDIDA BARJAS** 'ın, Türkiye'de iltica talebinde bulunmak istediğini teyit ederiz.

BMMYK, Ankara'da Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü bünyesindeki Yabancılar, Hudut ve İltica Dairesi ile temasa geçmiş, bunun üzerine başvuru sahibi – ve bakmakla yükümlü olduğu kişiler – Türk makamlarına kaydolmaları için ( **MARDIN** ) Valiliği Yabancılar Şubesine yönlendirilmiştir.

94/6169 sayılı Yönetmelik ve 57 Sayılı Uygulama Talimatına göre, kişinin iltica başvurusunun ilgili şehirdeki Yabancılar Şubesi tarafından geciktirilmeden kayıt altına alınması gerekmektedir. Ankara'daki BMMYK Ofisi ( **28.02.2022** ) tarihinde, başvuru sahibinin kayıt sürecini tamamlayacak ve kendisine bir BMMYK dosya numarası tahsis edecektir

**The UN Refugee Agency**

After ISIS attacks on Sinjar where Afiyah and more than 400k Yazidis live, Afiyah fled with her family from Sinjar to Turkey through Kurdistan region-Iraq. Thousands of similar examples are available upon request.

Many Yazidis are not registered with the UNHCR due to the great distances between where they live and where UNHCR offices are located. Yazidi refugees face many other challenges due to their religious identity. There have been many documented incidents of persecution and serious discrimination against Yazidis within refugee camps. For example, in Greece, Yazidi refugees face ongoing and serious discrimination from other refugees. Recently 231 Yazidi refugees in Katsikas, Greece were forced to leave their camp after lengthy harassment by radical Islamists who have infiltrated refugees arriving from Islamic countries.

Conditions in Turkey for the Yazidis have been worsening because of the military conflict in southeast Turkey between Turkish Government forces and the Kurds. On 30 September 2015, a large Turkish force (some 5000 soldiers) established a military base inside [Nusaybin Refugee camp](#), a camp that houses some 3000 Yazidi refugees. Such action and armed conflict near the four major Yazidi refugee camps in Turkey puts Yazidi refugees' lives at further great danger.

- [\*Report: Yazidis in Turkey's refugee camps discriminated against\*](#)
- [\*Report reveals plight of Yazidi refugees in Turkey\*](#)
- [\*Displaced And Traumatized By IS, Yazidis Try -- And Fail -- To Reach Europe\*](#)

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

Yazidis were among the first groups in Iraq who welcomed the end of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 and participated actively in the attempt to build a new Iraq. Many Yazidis joined Iraqi and Kurdistan security forces in their home regions and beyond. The change in Iraq after 2003 and relative peace in Yazidi areas led to significant economic development and transition from a mostly agricultural society to

a more urban society. In the period 2003-2014 Yazidis were among the most successful groups, taking advantage of the freedom to trade and a free market in the Kurdistan region and throughout Iraq. Yazidis areas enjoyed relative peace between 2003 and 2007. From 2003, but especially from 2007, Yazidis targeted individually and collectively by various radical Islamic groups:

- On February 15 2007, Extremists in Sheikhan launched a massive attack on Yazidi supreme religious leaders and Yazidi temples in Shikhan. The perpetrators were never put on trial for this 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, the Al-Qaida terrorist organization attacked two Yazidi towns in Sinjar and killed nearly 1000 Yazidi civilians. Local jihadists from Baaj and Sinjar planned and executed these attacks.
- Between 2003 and 2014, numerous Yazidis were killed in isolated incidents in Iraq (further information will be submitted on request).
- On 3 August 2014 the whole Yazidi community in Iraq was collectively targeted by ISIS, including Muslim neighbours, who conducted a planned and organised genocide against Yazidis and aimed at the complete annihilation of the Yazidi people.
- Over recent decades dozens of Yazidi girls and children have been kidnaped by Muslim men in a series of individual crimes. The kidnapping of a 12-year-old Yazidi girl named Simon and a 13 year old Yazidi girl named Lamia are two examples of such incidents; in both cases the perpetrators were never brought to justice.

Yazidis are not treated equally under the Iraqi legal system; Yazidis can not testify in Iraqi courts. A Yazidi's testimony is unacceptable because the Iraqi legal system considers Yazidis as not 'people of a book'. (Yazidis do not have a sacred



book such as the Bible, Koran or Torah.) Yazidis are treated as a third class citizen in Iraq, and historically, they have faced widespread vicious sectarian discrimination, finding it impossible to move up the social or political ladder. They have been denied a collective voice or equality in the political system of Kurdistan and Iraq. Although Yazidis are eligible to vote, their votes have often been manipulated to dilute and marginalise their influence.

- **The Yazidi Genocide is ongoing**

The ongoing genocide perpetrated against the Yazidi minority has been confirmed by several UN officials and reports. A United Nations human rights inquiry reported on 16 June 2016 that 'the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) [also known as ISIL and Da'esh] is committing genocide against Yazidis that amounts to crimes against humanity and war crimes.'

*"Genocide has occurred and is ongoing."*- Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, in United Nations report 'They Came to Destroy: ISIS Crimes against the Yazidis, 16 June 2016 [6]

The Yazidi genocide has been extensively documented by many important independent commentators, agencies and international organisations. Several countries have stated that the atrocities committed against Yazidis are 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."* - Suki Nagra, United Nations Investigator, UN press release, 19 March 2015.<sup>[2]</sup>

*"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."*- Zainab Hawa Bangura, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, 3 August 2015 <sup>[3]</sup>

Ms Bangura's statement also included the following:

*"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 and the international human rights lawyer Ms Amal Clooney to persuade the International Criminal Court to open an investigation into the "ongoing genocide" against Iraq's Yazidi community at the hands of Islamic State militants. <sup>[4]</sup>

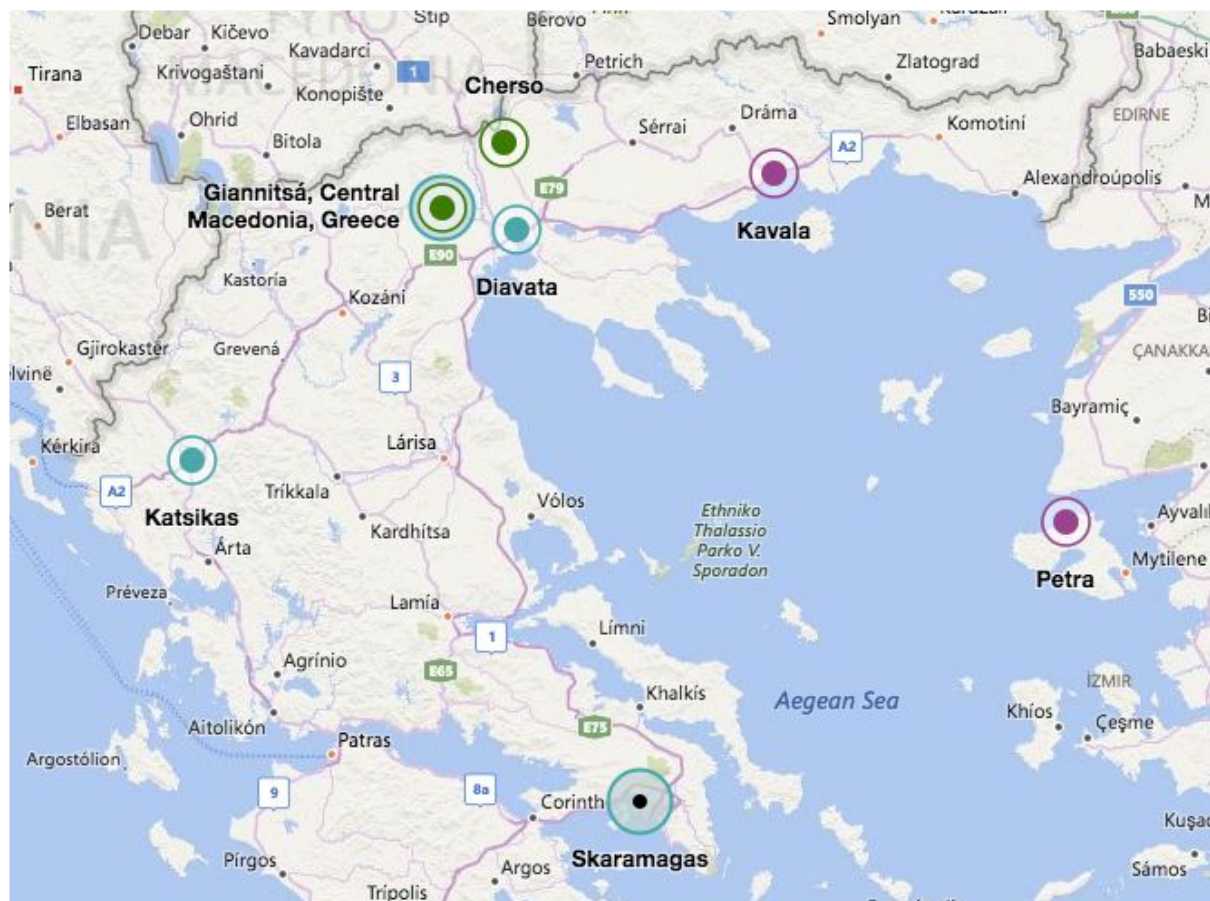
- **The number and precarious situation of Yazidi refugees in Turkey, Greece, and Syria:**

According to Yazda volunteers, there are **4650** in Greece, 2300 Yazidi refugees in Turkey, , and 5375 in Syria. These refugees include those who fled from ISIS, victims of ISIS, orphans, widows and people with special needs. The majority of Yazidi refugees in the aforementioned countries have registered with UNHCR while a significant minority could not register with UNHCR as they have no money to travel to the UN offices which are often very far away. Full statistics including the UNHCR number for each individual are available upon request.

Yazidi refugees who are in the areas controlled by Kurdish forces in Syria and Turkey face many challenges and their future is very uncertain; children have no access to education, healthcare is either not provided or is completely insufficient and humanitarian aid provided is insufficient and at subsistence level only. Camps in both countries lack adequate shelter, running water, toilets, cooking facilities and food. Moreover, UNHCR interviews for the majority of Yazidis in Turkey and Syria

are scheduled to take place at the earliest in 2022, which is intolerable and unrealistic due to the difficult living conditions they face and the unstable situation in the areas they currently live in. Yazidis feel that they are forgotten, ignored and their situation is not focused on because they are a small ethno-religious group without economic power or geopolitical leverage.

## 1- Yazidi Refugees in Greece



This map shows the locations of Yazidi Refugees in Greece

There are seven camps in Greece with Yazidi refugees. Security is the responsibility of Greece's Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Defence (MOD). Yazda is grateful to the Greek people and authorities for their efforts to help Yazidis and all other genuine refugees.

1. **Skaramangas Camp** in Athens has approx 800 Yazidis. **Location:** <https://goo.gl/maps/EnVN82Krvtn>
2. **Ioannina Camp** is run by UNHCR and has 240 Yazidis
3. **Giannitsa Camp** has 216 Yazidis in tents. They are the only ones without electricity among a wider group of refugees which includes a range of nationalities such as Syrians and Afghans. There are many vulnerable cases among the Yazidis in this camp.
4. **Serres Camp** has 430 Yazidis.
5. **Petra Camp** has 1400 Yazidis. Yazidis are the only ethno-religious group in this camp. It is run by the Greek military and police.
6. **Ritsona Camp** has 28 Yazidis
7. Lavrion Camp has 10 Yazidis
8. **Islands** There are also 146 Yazidis in two camps at Leros island (Pikpa camp and Hotspot camp) who arrived after 20 March, 2016. There are 64 Yazidis at Moria and Qara Tapa on Lesbos island. Also, there is a Yazidi family on Samos island and there are two Yazidi families on Chios island.

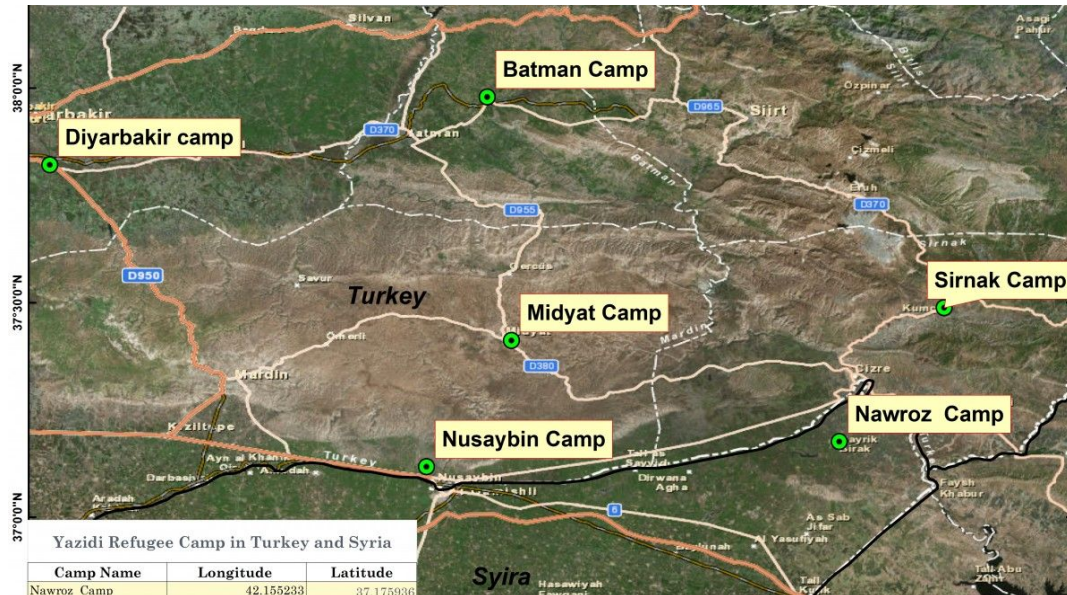
The total number of Yazidis in Greece, including those who arrived before and after 20 March 2016, is **4650** people. To read more about the situation of Yazidi refugees in Greece please follow the below links:

- 1- [Migration: Testimony from Yazidi refugees in Katsikas Camp, Greece](#)
- 2- [Stalled in Greece, Yazidi refugees' dream of safety still seems far away](#)
- 3- [Volunteers leave Greek island after attacks on refugees](#)

## 2- Yazidi Refugees in Turkey

Yazidi refugees in the southeast of Turkey were distributed between 8 refugee camps (see map below) with a total population of 11,270.





However, many Yazidis had to flee from Turkey back to Iraq or Greece as Conditions inside the camps in Turkey have worsened over the past few months due to the military conflict in the between PKK and Turkish army, especially in Nusayben Camp(a military camp) where 3000 Yazidis based with 5000 Turkish soldiers. Read more in this link: [Yazidi Refugees at Center of Political Fight Between Turkey, Kurds](#)

*Report: Yazidis in Turkey's refugee camps discriminated against.*

Currently, There are only 2300 Yazidis in Turkey and they are distributed between two camps as shown below:

Camp Name	Country	Longitude	Latitude	Yazidis refugees No.
Midyat camp	Turkey	41.388504	37.41182	450
Diyarbakir camp	Turkey	40.308088	37.820862	1750
Total				2300

## Refugee camp summary - Turkey

1. **Midyat camp**, Turkey: 450 Yazidi refugees are based in this camp.



2. **Diyarbakir camp**, Turkey: 1750 Yazidi refugees are living in this camp. In July 2015 Yazidis in this camp attempted to leave Turkey to seek asylum in Europe by walking en masse towards the Bulgarian border but were later beaten by Turkish police (Jundarma) and forcibly returned to the camp.

Report: [Turkish government, Kurdish authorities argue over Yazidi refugee](#)





### 3- Yazidi Refugees in Syria

In Syria, Yazidi refugees are mainly concentrated in [Camp Newroz](#) with a total population of 3000-3500. Camps locations are shown on the above map. Yazidi refugees are living in very difficult conditions in this camp.



### 4- ISIS survivors in Iraq

UN and many international and local organisations have confirmed that ISIS has kidnapped more than 5000 Yazidis, mainly women, girls and children. 2587 of those had managed to return back from ISIS captivity and there are still 3200 individuals within ISIS hands, according to the last [UN report](#) released on 15 June 2016

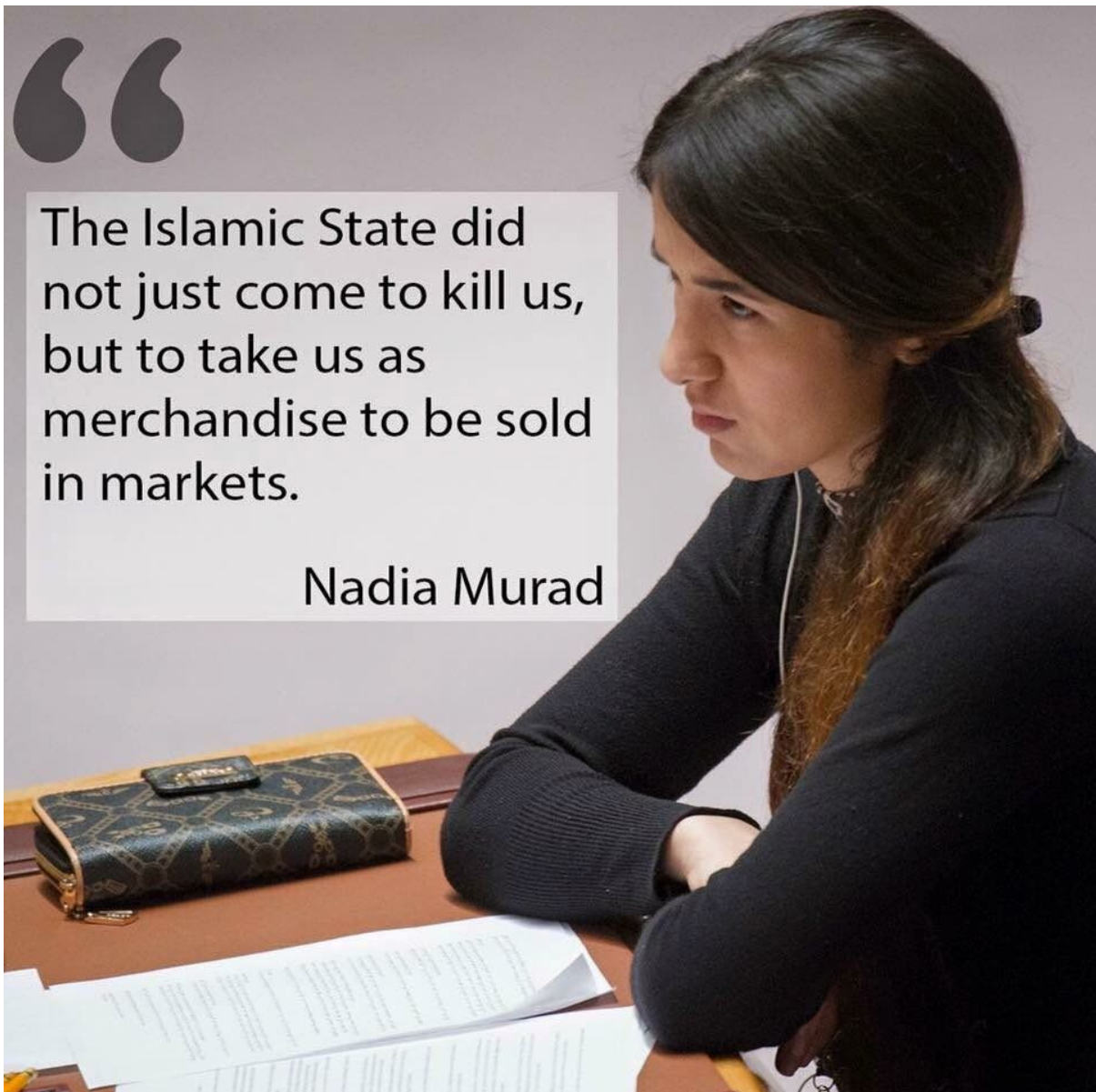
Those survivors have subjected to psychological, sexual and physical abuse under hands of ISIS militants. Therefore, they are in need of rehabilitation and psychological treatment that are not available in Iraq and Kurdistan. There are still more than **1500** of **2587** Yazidi survivors, females, and children, who suffer from a miserable situation in IDP camps in Kurdistan-Iraq.

Yazda and Yazidi community are grateful to [Germany](#) people and the government

there for hosting 1100 Yazidi survivors and thousands of Yazidi refugees. Yazda hope that Germany would host more Yazidi refugee or ISIS survivors because Yazidi believe that Germany is their first homeland.

Yazda organization also believes that such vulnerable groups should be prioritized in any refugee program in world countries.

Report: Germany has taken 1100 of those survivors: [Over 1,000 Yazidi women, girls seek healing in Germany after 'hell' with IS](#)



*Nadia Murad, Yazidi survivor and human right activist who resettled in Germany under a special program run by German Government to help 1100 Yazidi survivors.*



After two years of IS's attack on Yazidi areas, almost the entire Yazidi population is still displaced in IDP camps in Iraq-Kurdistan. While some of their areas were liberated, many towns south of Sinjar and Bashika and Bahzani in Nineveh plain are still under IS's control. Due to the security, economic, and political situation, and the scale of damage in the Yazidi liberated areas, the displaced Yazidis are facing unknown future.

The majority of Yazidis are IDPs not refugees because they couldn't flee from Iraq, and this is the main reason the Yazidis are not getting benefit from refugees program in many countries. Those IDPs are in need of protection because they are most vulnerable group.



*3rd of August 2016, Yazidi peaceful demonstration in Berlin on the 2nd anniversary of Yazidi genocide.*

- **Who are the Yazidis?**

Yazidism is considered by scholars to be one of oldest religions in the Middle East with a history that goes back 4000-6000 years. During their history, Yazidis have been subjected to 74 genocidal campaigns by Islamic fundamentalists, mostly



during the Ottoman Empire era. According to scholars, the total number of Yazidis is 700,000 people, with the vast majority of them concentrated in northern Iraq, in and around Sinjar and in the Nineveh Plains before August 2014. Yazidis are one of the longest established indigenous peoples of ancient Mesopotamia. They believe in God and seven angels with Melek Taus, or Peacock Angel being the head of the angelic pantuan.

In recent decades under the rule of Ba'ath regime, Yazidis were persecuted and forced to change many elements of their culture. Ba'ath regime human rights violations against Yazidis included forceful resettlement in compounds in Sinjar district and Nineveh Plain, confiscation of Yazidi property, prohibition on holding government or military positions, forbidding Yazidi names, policies to prevent Yazidis learning or publishing in their own language and the systematic murder and imprisoning of Yazidi activists.

**About Yazda:**

Yazda is a US-based non-profit, nongovernmental organization made up of roughly 70 staff and 200 volunteers around the globe. Yazad is a registered NGO in Sweden too and it is currently in the final stage of the registration process as a charity in the UK. While our main operations take place in Iraq, Yazda also has offices in the United States, United Kingdom and Sweden.

Established in 2014, Yazda was formed by Yazidis to respond to the various needs of the Yazidi community after the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) launched genocidal attacks against them in northern Iraq. As the ISIS fighters invaded the villages on the southern flank of Mount Sinjar, they forced hundreds of thousands of Yazidis from their homes, subjecting any captured to forced conversion, kidnapping, enslavement, sexual violence, torture and murder. In less than three months ISIS perpetuated mass atrocities with the aim of exterminating the Yazidi people, in the process destroying communities in which they had lived for countless generations.

The mission of Yazda is to support the surviving victims of genocide and to ensure the future safety of the Yazidi ethnoreligious minority group.

Our current initiatives include the following:

- 1- Essyan Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Primary Health Care Centre
- 2- A Case Management IT Platform for Former Captives
- 3- A Psychosocial Treatment and Trauma Support Centre for Female Survivors of ISIS Enslavement
- 4- Mobile medical service on Mount Sinjar
- 5- Aid work
- 6- Advancement of reconstruction in areas devastated by ISIS
- 7- Genocide documentation

8- Educational projects

9-Targeted worldwide advocacy campaign to promote the rights and humanitarian needs of Yazidis. Sponsoring Nadia Murad campaign.

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***The End***

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