

July 30, 2020

Statement by KRG Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA)

## **Statement in Response to Amnesty International's Report on Yazidi Children**

Amnesty International released a report today, July 30, 2020, entitled "IRAQ: LEGACY OF TERROR: THE PLIGHT OF YEZIDI CHILD SURVIVORS OF ISIS." The report observes the physical and mental conditions of Yazidi children residing in the camps in Iraq. A section of the report is dedicated to commenting on the well-being of Yazidi children in the Kurdistan Region.

The Directorate of Yazidi Affairs, along with committees created by PM and President offices have painstakingly sought to fulfill the necessities of Yazidi children and ease the traumas they witnessed over the past years. Moreover, KRG has established several coordinative networks with different local and international NGOs in this respect. Issues such as shortage of funds, post-traumatic diseases, and obtaining legal documentations still remain at stake; in addition to obstructions due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

ISIS treatment with Yazidi captives has been vicious and inhuman, thus, the KRG has put substantial efforts to remove some of their experienced pain by providing sufficient physical and psychological treatment as well as providing maternity services and medical equipment in the camps.

So far, only 6 children have been identified in KR-I that belong to unknown ISIL fathers. In Duhok, the children who don't have parents or guardians, or who arrived in the camps along with other families, are registered and documented. Moreover, legal agents are provided to finalize their papers in coordination with the Personal Status Court of Duhok. The process of obtaining IDs, citizenship, marriage papers, and etc. is ongoing. The Iraqi law in this respect has profound shortcomings; it stipulates that children born from unknown fathers be registered as Muslim and that hindered the documentation process. Currently, the efforts are resuming to amend the law, and remarkable steps have been made in this regard.

A law to protect Yazidi children should be enacted from Baghdad as the Federal Government has jurisdiction on most of the territories belonging to the Yazidi population. In this respect, a law is already drafted in the Iraqi Council of Representatives, and the process is ongoing to enact it. It is entitled "the Female Survivors Law". The draft law mostly pertains to compensations-mostly to women. The children are not adequately addressed in the law, however. KRG legislative authority endorses compensation for the Yazidi survivors regardless of age and gender, with the financial burden to be delegated to the Federal Government.

Furthermore, there is a project coordinated between the Duhok Investigative Commission and GIZ organization. The project contains descriptive interviews and profound data. It partly recommends the inclusion of children in the draft law mentioned above. is already finalized, and the report will be available in both English and Arabic versions in the next week. We will forward a copy to you as soon as it arrives.

There has been no enforcement by the KRG to make religious and ethnic components study in Kurdish and they have been supported to study in their mother language. Many schools exist in the Kurdistan Region specialized in teaching in all components' languages. A special body in the General Directorate of Education in Dohuk supervises the study of the Yezidi religion. Since 1999, Yazidi students have been studying their religion in public schools in their own areas from the first stage to the twelfth stage. This criterion covers the children who dwell in the camps too, of course. However, most of the children and their families in the camps are seeking refuge in a foreign country; and only a few applied for the available local education.

Medical and psychological support is provided for women who faced sexual violence by ISIL terrorists. The cadres employed are trained by Duhok Directorate of Health, and INGOs such as UNICEF, UNFPA, and GIZ. Specialized centers have also been dedicated that strive to promote societal reintegration and recovery. Furthermore, Duhok Governorate has cooperated with GIZ and UNICEF to enroll the female Yezidi survivors in the educational process.

**KRG Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA)**