



PEACE AND FREEDOM ORGANIZATION (PFO)

FOLLOW-UP REPORT: THE STATUS OF SINJAR AND THE YEZIDI COMMUNITY TWELVE YEARS AFTER THE GENOCIDE (2014–2026)

A Comprehensive Field and Institutional Assessment on Displacement, Justice, and Reconstruction



Peace and Freedom Organization (PFO)

FIELD MONITORING · HUMAN RIGHTS · COMMUNITY DOCUMENTATION

AUTHORING ENTITY & PRIMARY FIELD DOCUMENTATION

Authoring Entity & Primary Field Documentation: This investigative material and the direct field testimonies incorporated herein were produced through the field and monitoring efforts of the **Peace and Freedom Organization (PFO)**. The report is further supported by independent evidence, institutional mapping, and empirical data from a broad spectrum of field networks, including: reports from the Abductees Rescue Office, the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at the University of Duhok, the "Nobody's Listening" Project, EMMA Organization for Human Development, DAK Organization for Ezidi Woman Development, the Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR), Sema Media Network, Nawzhin Platform, Nada Coalition, as well as Geneva declarations and political statements from Nineveh components.

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"The Yazidi collective memory records this tragedy as the 74th Firman, marking it as a continuation of a historical continuum encompassing over 73 campaigns of genocide, persecutions, and marginalization spanning several decades."

"The empirical methodology of this report relies on a 'Triangulation & Grounded Empirical Approach,' directly implemented under the oversight of the Peace and Freedom Organization (PFO)." — All testimonies, metrics and figures contained in this publication are reproduced in full, exactly as documented in the field.

SECTION I

I. Historical Context, Structural Analysis of the Genocide, and Field Methodology

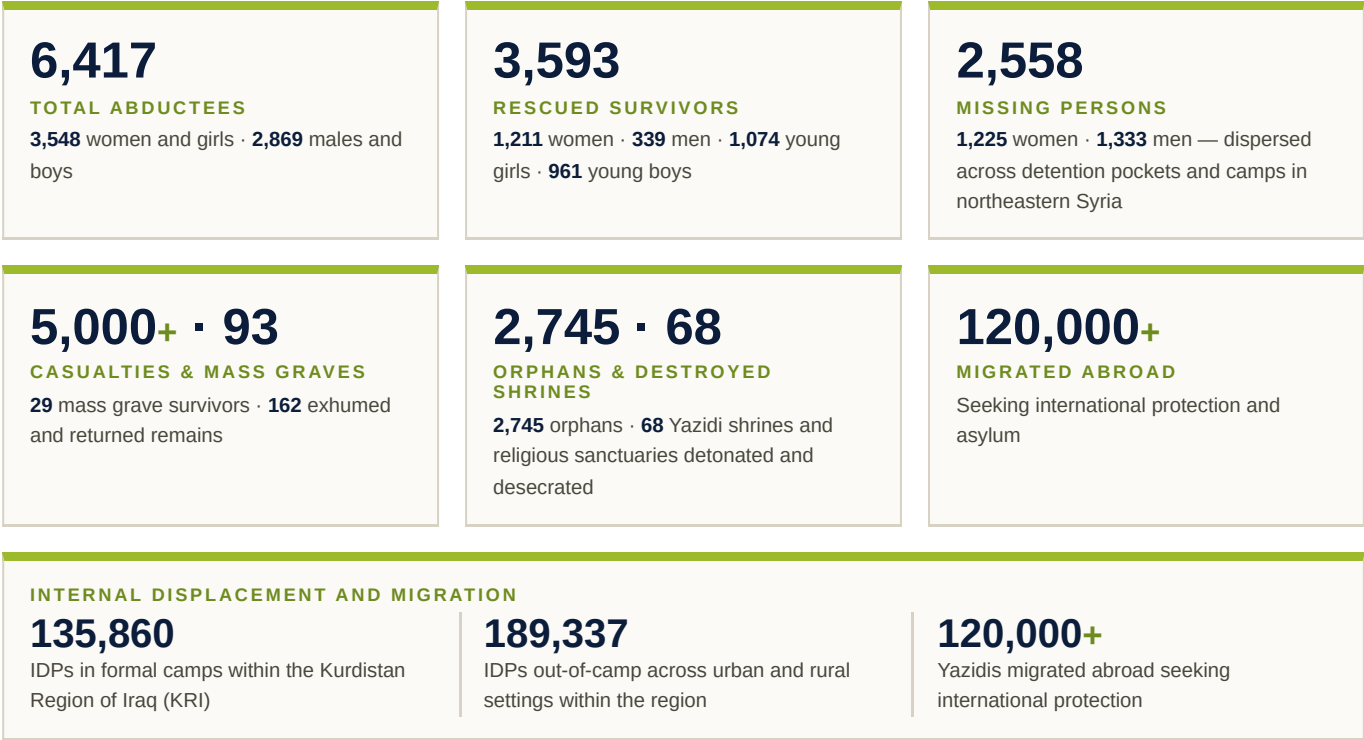
On August 3, 2014, the atrocity committed against Sinjar (Shingal) District and its surrounding areas in Nineveh Governorate was not merely an operational maneuver within the tactical expansion of ISIL (Da'esh); rather, it was a structural and systematic target aimed at eradicating an indigenous ethno-religious community from its ancestral homeland. The Yazidi collective memory records this tragedy as the **74th Firman**, marking it as a continuation of a historical continuum encompassing over 73 campaigns of genocide, persecutions, and marginalization spanning several decades.

The abrupt collapse of security arrangements on the morning of that tragic day involved an unscheduled withdrawal of the protective forces without prior warning to the local population or the organization of defensive actions and civilian evacuations. This breach left unarmed civilians vulnerable to a sweeping assault, resulting in the siege of over 300,000 Yazidis on Mount Sinjar under lethal environmental and humanitarian conditions, or their direct capture into ISIL captivity. Consequently, this abandonment sparked profound collective grievances alongside urgent national and international human rights demands for official hearings, the legal accountability of military leadership responsible for the retreat, and the prosecution of perpetrators for genocide and sexual violence rather than relying solely on formal anti-terrorism statutes.



Figure 1 — The ruins of Sinjar following the war with the Islamic State. Entire neighbourhoods of the district remain in destruction twelve years after the genocide. (Field archive photograph)

Updated Official Metrics of Genocide and Displacement:



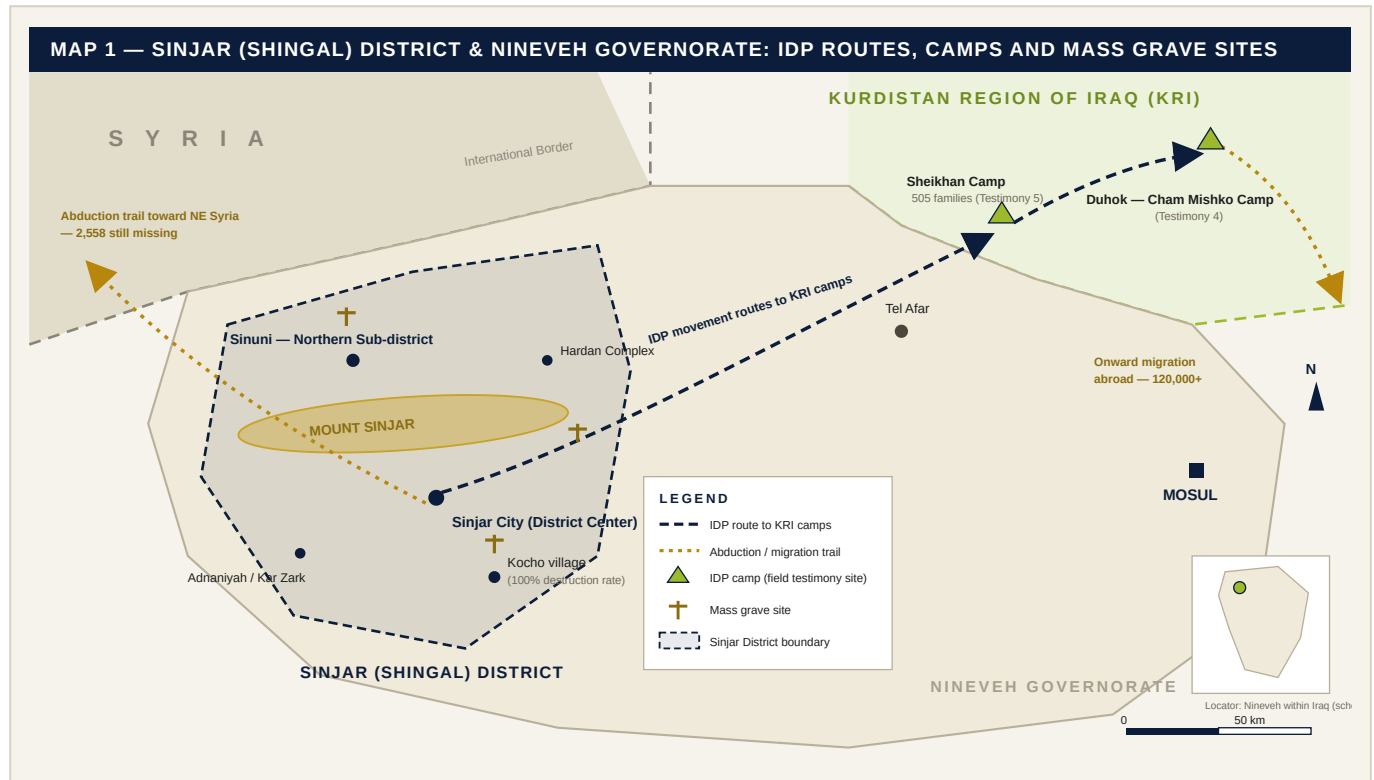
- **Abductees and Missing Persons:** The total number of forcibly abducted individuals reached **6,417** (comprising **3,548** women and girls subjected to systematic sexual slavery and **2,869** males and boys). Currently, **2,558** individuals remain unaccounted for or missing—specifically **1,225** women and **1,333** men—dispersed across detention pockets and camps in northeastern Syria.

■ **Rescued Survivors:** A total of **3,593** individuals have escaped or been rescued from ISIL captivity—disaggregated into **1,211** women, **339** men, **1,074** young girls, and **961** young boys—facilitated through complex rescue networks, financial tracking, and cross-border coordination.

■ **Casualties and Mass Graves:** Over **5,000** individuals were killed during the initial phase of the offensive in documented massacres such as that of Kocho village. To date, **93** mass graves have been identified in Sinjar and its peripheries, from which only **29** individuals survived execution attempts. The remains of **162** victims
- have been officially exhumed and handed over to their families, amid severe bottlenecks in exhuming remaining sites and processing DNA matching—exacerbated by the drawdown of the UN Investigative Team (UNITAD) and severe budgetary constraints affecting forensic and mass grave departments.

■ **Orphans and Cultural Heritage:** The genocidal campaign resulted in **2,745** orphans, alongside deliberate cultural destruction marked by the detonation and desecration of **68** Yazidi shrines and religious sanctuaries.

■ **Internal Displacement and Migration:** The atrocity precipitated mass internal displacement that persists today: **135,860** internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently reside in formal IDP camps within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), while **189,337** IDPs live out-of-camp across various urban and rural settings within the region. Furthermore, over **120,000** Yazidis have migrated abroad seeking international protection and asylum.



Map 1 — Stylized field map of Sinjar (Shingal) District and Nineveh Governorate: IDP movement routes toward camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Duhok / Sheikhan), mass grave sites (93 identified, including Kocho and district peripheries), the Northern Sub-district (Sinuni), and key locations referenced in the field testimonies. Schematic rendering — not to scale.

Empirical Field Methodology:

The empirical methodology of this report relies on a **"Triangulation & Grounded Empirical Approach,"** directly implemented under the oversight of the Peace and Freedom Organization (PFO). Rather than merely synthesizing international reports issued by UN bodies and rights groups (such as IOM, UN-Habitat, C4JR, Yazda, and FYF) alongside news updates from the Abductees Rescue Office, this document is fundamentally anchored in six qualitative, in-depth investigative interviews encompassing core pillars of the Yezidi community and human rights actors:

1. Civil society and human rights activist based inside Sinjar (**Faisal Ghanim**).
2. Project Manager at EMMA Organization for Human Development (**Gulchin**) alongside a survivor's case study.
3. International advocate, survivor, and Director of the "Nobody's Listening" Project (**Thikran Mato**).
4. IDP residing in displacement camps for 12 years (**Qasim Mahmoud Murad**).
5. Local camp administrative leadership in Duhok (**Mukhtar Qado**).
6. Researcher and conflict resolution consultant (**Khdir Domle**).

This is complemented by the integration of political manifestos and statements.



Figure 2 — Reference: Districts of the Nineveh Governorate, with Sinjar in the west of the governorate. (Archive reference map)

II. Empirical Field Testimonies (PFO Primary Evidence)

TESTIMONY 1 OF 6

**Faisal Ghanim**

CIVIL SOCIETY & HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST — SINJAR

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1. Testimony of Civil Society Activist (Faisal Ghanim) – Sinjar's Reality, Services, and Compensation

Civil activist Faisal Ghanim presents a field-based assessment of Sinjar District 12 years after the genocide:

- **Return and Displacement Dynamics:** Estimates point to the return of approximately 180,000 to 190,000 individuals to Sinjar; however, those permanently settled in their original villages and complexes do not exceed 150,000. Roughly 20% of returnees were forced to settle in alternative areas, such as the Northern Sub-district (Sinuni) and the district center, owing to the total destruction of their original villages. Meanwhile, over 200,000 individuals remain in protracted displacement.
- **Impediments to Return:** Reluctance to return stems from a divergence of factors: some possess businesses and stability in the Kurdistan Region, while others lost their homes entirely (such as Adnaniyah/Kar Zark, Kocho village with a 100% destruction rate, Jazeera, and Hardan complexes). Additionally, families who lost most of their members dread returning to the sites of tragedy.
- **Infrastructure and Services Collapse:** Ghanim notes that while security is relatively stable, basic services have collapsed:
 - **Education:** Extreme overcrowding, with up to 60 students per classroom and schools operating on 3 to 4 shifts daily.
 - **Health, Electricity, and Water:** Severe deterioration in healthcare, weak power supply, and total reliance on private wells for water. For example, the electricity department for the entire Northern Sub-district employs only 6 personnel while requiring dozens.
 - **Compensation:** The government has not constructed a single home nor provided financial compensation for destroyed properties; rehabilitation has been confined to inadequate NGO interventions.
- **Survivors Law & Psychosocial Support:** While the Yezidi Survivors Law is an excellent framework, its implementation rate does not exceed 10% (restricted almost exclusively to monthly pensions), while provisions for land allocation, healthcare, monumentation, and collective reparations remain frozen. With declining international funding, psychosocial support programs have dropped by 90%.

"The government has not constructed a single home nor provided financial compensation for destroyed properties; rehabilitation has been confined to inadequate NGO interventions."

II. Empirical Field Testimonies (PFO Primary Evidence)

TESTIMONY 2 OF 6



Gulchin

PROJECT MANAGER — EMMA ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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2. Testimony of Project Manager at EMMA Organization (Gulchin) & A Survivor's Case Study

Activist Gulchin clarifies the realities of international support and psychosocial needs:

- **Declining International Attention:** International support toward the Yezidi cause experienced a sharp drop in 2026 compared to 2014–2016, diverted by competing global crises. Current camp conditions are worse than in earlier years, marked by deep exhaustion and despair.
- **Survivors Law Execution:** Implementation remains confined to monthly pensions, while rehabilitation, compensation, and land allocation stall, compounded by administrative hurdles that force survivors to endure traumatic flashbacks to prove eligibility.
- **Economic Empowerment vs. Mental Health:** Economic empowerment programs are vital for self-reliance, but they must complement—not replace—mental health services and essential protection. Furthermore, plans to close camps or return residents with minimal cash hand-outs without securing Sinjar's infrastructure and security represent an unjust policy.
- **A Survivor's Case Study (The Trauma of Return in a Service Vacuum):**

Gulchin shares a case study of a survivor who received regular psychosocial therapy in a camp, making positive progress, marrying, and building a new life. However, amid declining camp services, her family made a collective decision to return to Sinjar without considering her individual mental health needs. Upon arrival in Sinjar, she confronted a complete vacuum of medical and psychological services. The disruption of her therapeutic care severely undermined her stability. Her sole option to continue therapy was onerous, continuous travel to Duhok City—a journey entailing prohibitive financial costs her family could not afford. Most agonizingly, the travel route passes through the very villages and sites where the 2014 abductions and atrocities occurred, triggering severe flashbacks and acute trauma during every round trip. This situation led to a severe relapse, leaving her trapped between financial hardship, travel trauma, and complete deprivation of essential psychological care.

II. Empirical Field Testimonies (PFO Primary Evidence)

TESTIMONIES 3 – 4 OF 6

**Thikran Mato**

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE & SURVIVOR — DIRECTOR, "NOBODY'S LISTENING"

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3. Testimony of International Advocate & Survivor (Thikran Mato) – "Nobody's Listening" & International Justice

Thikran Mato, Director of "Nobody's Listening" and a survivor of two years in ISIS captivity, analyzes international justice tracks:

- **Global Priorities and Time Factor:** The Yazidi file remains on the international agenda but no longer occupies top priority. Time works against victims; advocacy must shift from sympathy to institutionalized, measurable policies.
- **Closing the Gap Between Slogans and Reality:** Annual slogans ("Never Again") are meaningless unless translated into schools, hospitals, homes, jobs, security, and dignified return.
- **Technology and VR (Nobody's Listening):** Utilizing virtual reality and art to bridge the gap between audiences and survivors, transforming exhibitions into memory-preservation tools before international parliaments and universities.
- **Judicial Discrepancy:** Expressing dismay that no ISIS fighter has been prosecuted in Iraq specifically for genocide or crimes against humanity (proceedings are restricted entirely to Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005), contrasting this with landmark convictions for genocide secured in European courts (such as Germany).
- **The Human Toll of Missing Persons (ICMP Field Experience):** Mato recounts a poignant experience while collecting DNA samples in Germany: A young Yazidi girl whose father went missing in Mosul broke down uncontrollably upon being asked for a sample; after years of clinging to hope that he was alive, she perceived the DNA request as a definitive declaration of his death. Mato stresses that delays in exhuming mass graves and matching DNA samples prevent thousands of families from obtaining closure.

**Qasim Mahmoud Murad**

12-YEAR IDP RESIDENT — CHAM MISHKO CAMP, DUHOK

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4. Testimony of 12-Year IDP Resident (Qasim Mahmoud Murad - Cham Mishko Camp)

Qasim Murad conveys daily life inside Cham Mishko Camp in Duhok:

- **Living and Educational Conditions:** Caravan shelters fail to mitigate extreme weather conditions. Arabic-curriculum education suffers severe deterioration, with triple-shift school scheduling causing widespread illiteracy among primary students.
- **Economic Obstacles to Return:** Poverty and total reliance on agricultural day-labor (8,000 to 9,000 IQD per day) form the primary barrier to return; returning to Sinjar means forfeiting this sole livelihood source due to the destruction of over 80% of residential homes and the lack of jobs.
- **Psychological Distress & Compensation:** Camp residents feel trapped inside a "closed cage". Government compensation is non-existent (only 5 families out of 1,800 caravans have received reconstruction grants), making mass international emigration the primary goal for most residents.



Figure 3 — Daily life inside a displacement camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where 135,860 IDPs remain in formal camps twelve years after the genocide. (Field archive photograph)

II. Empirical Field Testimonies (PFO Primary Evidence)

TESTIMONIES 5 – 6 OF 6

**Mukhtar Qado**

CAMP MUKHTAR — SHEIKHAN CAMP

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5. Testimony of Camp Mukhtar (Qado - Sheikhan Camp) – Forced Closure & Land Titling Obstacles

Mukhtar Qado outlines the plight of 505 families residing in Sheikhan Camp:

- **Living Conditions & Camp Closure:** Families reside under torn plastic sheeting amid fire hazards and weather extremes, compounded by a near-total cessation of relief food baskets. Forced camp closure policies by the Ministry of Migration create panic, as 70% of residents lack financial resources to rebuild homes in Sinjar.
- **Land Titling Burdens:** Land titling decrees have achieved titling for no more than 40% in Sinjar overall, and less than 10% among camp residents. Widows and wives of missing persons face complex administrative hurdles without institutional support.

**Khdir Domle**

HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERT & CONFLICT RESOLUTION CONSULTANT

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6. Testimony of Human Rights Expert & Conflict Resolution Consultant (Khdir Domle) – Deconstructing Hate Speech & Digital Peacebuilding

Mr. Khdir Domle provides a rigorous analysis of hate speech targeting Yazidis and minorities:

- **Dynamics of Hate Speech:** Hate speech spikes following trigger events (such as fabricated reports regarding Al-Rahman Mosque, distorted statements regarding genocide impacts, and the passing of Baba Sheikh).
- **Digital Platforms:** Social media (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram) and closed WhatsApp groups serve as the primary vectors feeding incitement.
- **Social Cohesion & Return:** Incitement erodes inter-communal trust and re-triggers 2014 trauma among survivors. Certain political factions exploit this instability to prevent minority return, hindering their demographic and political representation in Nineveh.
- **Counter-Strategies & Digital Peacebuilding:** Urging religious endowments (Sunni, Shia, Yazidi, Christian) to issue disavowals discrediting takfiri narratives. Enforcing legal statutes (Article 372 of the Iraqi Penal Code) and adopting the **Digital Peace Concept Approach** to flag and neutralize incitement through positive counter-narratives and legal reporting platforms like "Balagh".



Figure 4 — The August 2014 exodus: Yazidi families fleeing across the slopes of Mount Sinjar under lethal environmental and humanitarian conditions. (Field archive photograph)

SECTION III

III. Deconstructing Hate Speech: Impacts on Psychosocial Well-being and Voluntary Return

Incitement and takfiri hate speech constitute an ideological continuation of the structural aggression inflicted upon the Yezidi component.

1. **Direct Psychological Toll:** Extremist digital rhetoric triggers post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and acute anxiety among survivors, reviving feelings of terror and severe vulnerability experienced in August 2014.
2. **Obstructing Demographics and Return:** Takfiri rhetoric creates fear that deters displaced families from voluntary return to Sinjar—a outcome exploited by political actors aiming to diminish the Yezidi community's political and demographic weight in Nineveh Governorate.
3. **Legal and Procedural Gaps:** Despite existing penal statutes (such as Article 372 of the Iraqi Penal Code), legal recourse remains hindered by procedural complexities, fear of reprisal, and sluggish responses by authorities in tracking incitement across digital platforms.

SECTION IV

IV. Judicial Assessment: International Precedents vs. Domestic Legal Vacuums

Over a decade post-genocide, a profound dichotomy persists between international and domestic judicial tracks:

- **International Track:** Documentation efforts successfully leveraged **Universal Jurisdiction**, yielding landmark life-imprisonment convictions in European courts (Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium) that explicitly classified ISIS crimes as "Genocide", "Crimes Against Humanity", and "Sexual Slavery".
- **Domestic Iraqi Track:** The Iraqi federal penal framework lacks explicit statutory provisions incorporating core international crimes (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity) into domestic law. Consequently, ISIS fighters are prosecuted exclusively under **Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005**—a reductive charge that penalizes terrorist membership while erasing the specific criminal documentation of genocide.
- **Implementation of Survivors Law No. 8 of 2021:** Actual execution remains restricted to roughly 10% (confined to monthly pensions for 2,216 beneficiaries), while provisions for land titling, educational accommodations, healthcare, and collective reparations remain stalled.
- **Legal Limbo for Widows and Missing Persons:** The judiciary's refusal to issue official death certificates for the **2,558 missing persons** prior to statutory waiting periods traps widows in legal limbo regarding property rights, guardianship of minors, and access to state pensions.



Figure 5 — Exhumation works at a mass grave site in Sinjar. To date, 93 mass graves have been identified in Sinjar and its peripheries; the remains of 162 victims have been officially exhumed and handed over to their families. (Field archive photograph)

SECTION V

V. Political and Security Breakdown: Deconstructing the Failure of the 2020 Sinjar Agreement

The **Sinjar Agreement**, signed in October 2020 between Baghdad and Erbil under UNAMI auspices, exemplifies complete administrative and political paralysis, stymied by six structural impasses:

- 1. Armed Proliferation and Factional Control:** The refusal of Sinjar Resistance Units (YBŞ) to evacuate, alongside the integration of YBŞ fighters into official Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) rosters (78th and 80th Brigades), grants them state legal and financial backing, making eviction unfeasible.
- 2. Deep Mistrust in State Forces:** The local populace firm rejection of external state forces due to the trauma of the August 2014 military retreat, insisting that local security must be managed exclusively by a locally recruited Yezidi force.
- 3. Dual Administrative Governance:** Sinjar remains fractured under rival administrations (an official administration operating remotely from Duhok, and a local Self-Administration operating inside Sinjar backed by the PMF and YBŞ), preventing consensus on appointing a neutral Mayor.
- 4. Marginalization of Local Actors:** The agreement was brokered top-down without consulting local tribal leaders, CSOs, or community representatives, leading locals to view it as an external political deal, compounded by declining international funding.
- 5. Geopolitical Rivalries:** Ongoing regional airstrikes (Turkey) targeting suspected positions, alongside regional factions viewing Sinjar as a vital land corridor connecting Mosul to the Syrian border.
- 6. Article 140 Ambiguity:** Sinjar's status as a disputed territory under Article 140 subjects its administrative and security file to constant political friction between Erbil and Baghdad.

(This analysis aligns with the official statement issued by the Nineveh Branch of the Kurdistan Communist Party on the 12th anniversary, calling for ending dual administration, disarming non-state actors, forming an international tribunal, halting regional airstrikes, and opening recruitment for local youth within state security structures).

SECTION VI

VI. Actionable Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

- 1. Criminalizing and Prosecuting Hate Speech:** Monitor and shut down digital incitement accounts via the state "Balagh" platform; compel official religious endowments (Sunni, Shia, Yezidi, Christian) to issue regular disavowals discrediting takfiri rhetoric and penalize extremist rhetoric within their ranks.
- 2. Accelerating Property Compensation & Streamlining Procedures:** Expedite financial compensation grants for destroyed residential properties; streamline consular and administrative paperwork for survivors in the diaspora without requiring physical travel to Iraq; operationalize land titling under Cabinet Decree 320/2022.
- 3. Halting Forced Camp Closures & Securing Relief:** Suspend premature camp closures pending secure, service-equipped conditions in Sinjar; reinstate food and relief assistance; deploy mobile mental health teams across camps and returnee areas.

Long-Term Recommendations

- 1. Comprehensive Development & Sustainable Livelihoods:** Launch a fully funded developmental roadmap to rebuild infrastructure, water/electricity networks, and agricultural wells in Sinjar; create sustainable employment and economic empowerment projects alongside protection services to halt demographic depletion.
- 2. Specialized Penal Legislation & Digital Peacebuilding:** Enact an Iraqi Penal Code amendment incorporating genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity; adopt **Digital Peacebuilding frameworks (Digital Peace Concept Approach)** to neutralize online extremism; allocate permanent funding for the Medico-Legal Directorate to complete mass grave exhumations and DNA matching.
- 3. Security Decentralization & Memorialization:** Establish a localized, state-affiliated security force recruited exclusively from Sinjar residents; unify local administration by appointing a consensus Mayor; secure formal parliamentary recognition of the Yezidi Genocide; construct a National Genocide Museum to preserve collective memory.



PEACE AND FREEDOM ORGANIZATION (PFO)

Towards Justice, Dignity, and Sustainable Return.

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