



**CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

**Human Rights Council: 28th Session
Oral Intervention- Item 6 – UPR-Iraq
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
19 March 2015**

Thank you Madam Vice President,

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and the Initiative of Yazidis Around the World, would like to address this Council on the unprecedented situation faced by ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq today. We are extremely concerned about the systematic targeting of women and minorities by ISIL and condemn the barbaric acts practiced against them; acts which may amount to serious international crimes.

We also would like to remind the government of Iraq of its responsibility to protect minorities and uphold human rights for all, especially during the current turbulent circumstances in the country.

During its UPR, Iraq accepted 11 recommendations on providing adequate and effective protection to minorities. In fact, the Iraqi delegation itself described to this Council in depth the gross atrocities committed against Yazidi men, women, and girls by ISIL, labelling it as constituting potential crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

However, the violations against Yazidis continue unabated, with the government of Iraq paying little attention to address ongoing violations, amend legislations to protect minorities, or guarantee proper investigations with the view of ensuring justice for victims.

Around 5,000 Yazidi men have been killed and 1,500 children have been trained as combatants. According to the UN, around 3,000 persons, mainly Yazidis, remain in ISIL captivity. A total of over 5000 women and girls have been kidnapped and sold as sex slaves, both inside and outside Iraq. The ones released are left without any psychological or social rehabilitation by the state, with the majority suffering from serious post-traumatic stress or other dire health problems. So far 85 % of Yazidi population are internally displaced, living in camps in dire need of adequate humanitarian support. What measures have been taken by the government to protect all those individuals?

Madam Vice President,

The grave situation that presents itself on the ground in Iraq is one that is escalating daily before our eyes. It is a fight against time, but also against our own humanity and those principles we hold very sacred. Now more than ever, we have to realize that we cannot win the current war against violent extremism and terrorism without prioritizing human rights and dignity. The timeframe is imperative to protect Yazidi men, women, and children from imminent death, rape, torture and kidnapping and to protect Iraq from forever falling into the hands of brutality. If this is not done today, tomorrow is too late.

Thank you Madam Vice President.