

# **Social Effects of War on Kurdish Society: the Case of Post ISIS Yezidi Community**

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## **Abstract**

ISIS, as an extremist group had assumed (and still has as an underground tendency) very intricate ideology and programs, most importantly including: political, religious and military ones. Yezidism is not an Abrahamic religion and its root comes from an ancient religion that calls Mithraism; because of this they haven't a prophet and a book. They believe only in (GOD). They believe that good and evil have one gate which is only (GOD). They don't believe in (DEVIL). They also believe that Melek-Taus is the chief of angels and he is in charge of universe on behalf of God. However, some people believe that the main distinctive point between Muslims and Yezidis is this tenant; Yezidis believe that the origins of individuals' thinking and directing daily actions and functions is God and Melek-Taus, while the accepted idea in Islam is simply to account bad things to the devil alone rather than involving God. Thus, accepting the idea of Devil in such a manner caused Yezidis to be targeted with hatred and animosity for centuries not least in Iraq. There is on the other hand a constantly strong conflict and competition between the main predominant actors in the Middle East against each other. Thus, this study is dedicated to critically explain certain social effect of this crime against humanity that devastated Yezidi community amidst an international indifference toward victims in time and at post war era.

**Keyword:** Ideology; ISIS; Sexual violence; War; Yezidi.

## **1. Introduction**

Historically, Yezidi community has been the victim of many violent attacks and trials which could be stretched back to Ottoman Empire when Yezidis were attacked by extremist movements that desired to force changes under some forms of religious violence. Their community has gone through at least 72 attempts at extinction and genocides. However, in actuality, victims of trial and genocide are an important factor of the common history of Yezidi identity and community. The high level of violence and atrocities encouraged a massive wave of displacement into the Kurdistan Region in Iraq and Syria. This move of ethnic cleansing through mass killings has been widely recognized as an act of genocide. It has destroyed all kinds of trust and relations between communities. The use of sexual violence and involuntary effect has been occurring frequently, it is a form of thinking that can give relevant details as 'strategy of war' practices of Islamic State (IS). Of those 'strategies of war' is the use of terrorism to rule the areas under its control. Those strategies had begun to take form after IS had expanded its territories, this expansion has come from Syria to Iraq, after the organization gained more strength as a result of the growing number of fighters joining its ranks come from multiple regions including Russia, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and U.S. The Islamic State in Iraq Levant (ISIL) leaders allocated approaches of sexual slavery of non-Muslim women and others which exists within strange opinions adopted by Jihadists. This material shows up indication of being on structural policy to obligate essential international crimes and beneficial order to Islamic States in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) attacks of Yezidis population. Furthermore, the withdrawal of the Peshmerga from the region has seriously damaged the relationship between the Yezidi community and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

## **2. The Islamic State's Ideology and Influence on Yezidi Community**

As previously mentioned, ISIS has a multi-variant complex ideology and expansionist programs to recruit and brainwash whoever might happen to be a target of them. For decades, the strong states that have exercised power via prompting religious, emotional and fanatical ideas and made a relatively remarkable effect in the region of Kingdom of Saudi Arabiya (KSA), the self-imposing represent of the Sunni countries, and Iran, as the main land of exporting and tactically spreading Shiism (Shia Islam). As a result and partly due to this ideological struggle and conflicts, there have been growing organizations like ISIS, which are adopting the policy of operating all kinds of fight and violence against non-Muslim groups or minorities in the region,

among them the Yezidi community in Iraq. Sexual Jihad (adopted and invented by ISIS and similar groups) led the ISIS militants to ruthlessly capture Yezidi girls and women and enslaving them basing on some Fatwa (jurisprudential opinions) of Jihadists, something that is clearly alien to Islam as a religion of peace and coexistence. Attacking Yezidi community is the most recent form of genocide in the twenty first century that caused traumatic experiences on all levels, which led to humanitarian and social heart-breaking consequences. Moreover, ISIS, addressing strategic aspects social and political aspects of individuals and social groups under its grip, tried to manipulate individuals politically, religiously, military, and reproduce what is tested to achieve and linking by this drive from the amusing foundation of acknowledgment (Gambhir, 2014).

The origins of ISIS can be drawn back to Al-Qaida (It is known as a terrorist organization), historians of the Islamic State agree that the group emerged out of al-Qaeda in Iraq as a response to the U.S. invasion in 2003. They also agree that it was shaped primarily by a Jordanian jihadist and the eventual head of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The Jordanian had a dark vision: He wished to fuel a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites and establish a caliphate. Although he was killed in 2006, his vision was realized in 2014—the year ISIS attacked northern Iraq and eastern Syria (Atlantic, 2018). In a defiant spirit, al-Qaeda announced the name of the man it appointed to the helm of its operations in Iraq less than a week after the death of al-Zarqawi: Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, who the U.S. government says is Sheikh Abu Ayyub al-Masri (al-Jazeera, 2015), and backing the past reason established Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) which is in union with Al-Qaida (Al-Tamimi 2014). In 2010 Abu- Baker al- Baghdadi new lead by outfit killing of Masri as Islamic state created a center of operation of Iraq and Levant in April 2013. Under this extremist umbrella included Jabhat al- Nusra as well, which is another terrorist organization in Syria allied to Al- Qaida as part known ISIS (Gulmohamad, 2014).

The aim of ISIS is to keep up Muslim watcher to do whatever may save them distinctly the Muslim individuals named themselves flowing competent element to protection of Sunni Arab and authenticity joining to like organizations may be classified is 'victory' (Ahram, 2015). ISIS has attracted more resistance and increased real armed success, such as that seen in Mosul and Sanjar, Iraq, so it shows its message very well (Ali, 2015).

### **3. Islamic states' Violence against Yazidi Community**

One of the ISIS linking attacks conducted against Yazidi community included ferocious methods of torture, abuse, degrading and dehumanization. Basically, its plans and strategies have worked well via social media to achieve consideration of mass broadcast tactical policy and strengths to control it is message provision to their relevant groups (Nissen, 2014). ISIS has refrains message behind its bliss too, firstly there is the resolution the conflict of Syrian Sunni Arab children killed by Shiites and its planning to destroy Sunni Muslims life-threatening by sectarianism in Syria. It had been claimed that ISIS was created to primarily defend Sunni Arab Muslims (Ali, 2015) but it showed that Sunni Arabs achieved nothing from ISIS except violence and destruction. Ultimately, it may call for victory, greater ISIL resistance that has real power must persist, and real armed success such as Mosul and Sinjar are on the rise, thus revealing its true message behind the scenes (Fernandez, 2015). Yazidis are one of ancient ethnic and religious society's aboriginal in the Middle Eastern region. It was broadly known that they have been living in the northwest of Iraq in a place called Sinjar, and that they are considered one of oldest Kurdish religion in the east. The Yazidi population was estimated to be about 640,000, of whom approximately 400,000 lived in and around Sinjar prior to the ISIS attack, the remaining third of their population lived in Sheikhan, which is a transit area between the mountains of Southern Kurdistan and the Nineveh Plains. The Kurdistan Regional Government quickly proceeded to protect Yazidis on the plains, and the Kurdish authorities have given this area special attention since 2003, including through major investments to restore public infrastructure and many oil fields. Thus, most of Sheikhan remained protected from ISIS attacks (Kinyat, 2018).

In Yazidis religion they have three different castes, Sheikhs, Pira and Murids. All people are murids and each person is belonging to a specific sheikh and Pira. Mir and baba-Sheikh are both from the sheikh caste (They also have three different sheikh families which they are not allowed to get married from the other families of sheikhs. However, Kreyenbroek and Omarkhali, (2016) explained that Yazidi society arranged to allow social class like Indian caste -system, on the highest, there is the Mir who is the secular leader and Baba Sheikh who has the mystical power. As a key feature of Yazidism belief one source of GOD and Evil is more than trusting in the basis of GOD and Evil. The central fundamental of Yazidism is a power of excellent arch-angle of Yazidi named Melek-Taus in all the time helping them a leader to choices between GOD and

Evil. But on the other hand Melek-Taus accepted simply to account of Evil in Islam, it believes that remained as a cause of abundant awareness against Yezidis in Iraqi community. The group of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, later became famous as Islamic state, attacked the Iraqi army and gained a large area of Anbar, Falluja, and Mosul, and in 2014 took control of the Yezidi city Sinjar, The number of people displaced by the ISIS attack reached 360,000, of them 2745 were orphans. The statistic also stated that the death toll in the first days of the attack reached 1293. The authors see it necessary to mention that all Yezidis are living in the Kurdish areas and all their praise and texts and ceremonies are in Kurdish language and their language is Kurdish. The authors also believe that they haven't been displaced into Kurdistan Iraq and Syria but they have been displaced from Iraq and Syria into Kurdistan region. The number of mass graves discovered in Sinjar has now reached 81 mass graves, in addition to dozens of individual grave sites. According to the latest statistics announced by the Yezidis kidnapped rescue office, the number of kidnapped is 6,417, 3548 of them are females, and 2,899 are males. There are still 2,877 Yezidis kidnapped by ISIS, 1,308 females, and 1,579 males (<https://www.akhbaralaan.net/news/arab-world/2020>). In this genocidal crime which was systematically planned for, Yezidi men were immediately killed after arresting. On the other hand, adult, children, girls, and women abducted and had been dealt with as subjects of human trafficking and sexual slaves while international community remained unmoved practically (Yaseen, 2018)..

ISIS follows sexual violence doctrine, which may have the widest plea for periods in Iraq and Syria and rose from a very unique socio-political location that has been instilled with crime and mainly sexualized violence against women, it believes that exercising sex with non-Muslim women and girls, no matter what would be their age, is a religious encouraged act, though it has nothing to do with Islamic and Quranic value in principal (Ahram, 2015).

#### **4. Islamic State's Sexual Jihad and Enslavement against Yezidis Women**

Sexual Jihad is relatively a contemporary invented concept through which ISIS Jihadists tried to deceive their deviated followers across the world. The term widely actualized in ISIS discourse right after attacking Sinjar and capturing thousands of women and dealing with as sexual enslaved objects on one hand, and investing the idea to psychologically manipulate the emotions of millions of believers and non-believers worldwide on the other hand. However the concept of Sexual Jihad though mentioned in their Fatwa it is hardly clear in Islam. Obviously, a Fatwa is an

Islamic term which Muftis usually use whenever they are consulted on a specific matter in an Islamic perspective. ISIS issued hundreds of Fatwa to legitimize for its loyalists the brutal behaviors they committed against humanity, not least against Yezidis in Kurdistan. In this respect they contended that according to religious rules women can offer themselves as sexual volunteers to Jihadi armed men who supposedly were protecting society including family and women in return, moreover militants were encouraged to enforce women and girls for having intercourse with them whenever they reject it willingly or not surrendering themselves, since it was considered to offer sex to more than one man simultaneously. That is why they did not need to marry a woman prior to sexual enjoyment; accordingly they confidently keep the Yezidis women as a slave and believed that they are assumed to men as 'gift from Allah' (Ali, 2015).

Attacks against the Yezidi is a complex specific characteristic in the aims of ISIS, in order to achieve their goals ISIL allows their members to rape against Yezidi's women and children. Firstly it is the imprisonment of civil citizens and heartless departure of Yezidi's families, then it is mass killing of men and enforcing them changing their religious beliefs (Wittlaan, 2017). Islam strongly stands against recruitment of children to join in the fighting battles under all circumstances. Finally regulated method of sexual violence against Yezidi's women where thousands of them transported and reserved imprisonment was a unique crime in cruelty done under the name of Islam (Gulmohamad, 2014).

Yezidi women and girls were recording and filmed compulsory to live in by coldhearted condition including rape, involuntary marriages and human trafficking for sexual determinations, additionally using Yezidi women and girls as 'sex slave' in slavery markets, which are known in many areas, was another tribulation they experienced. It is believed that Yezidi females were immediately sold or compulsory married and lived as sex slaves, and experienced regular 'rapes' and practices of sexual violence for long times (Ceri, et al., 2016). Rape has several definitions, Denis Mukwege, Nobel peace prize laureate argues that "Rape is not just a physical, violent act perpetrated against one victim; it is an assault on humanity "(Mukwege, cited by Aljazeera.com). According to Amnesty International Organization (AIO) it has been estimated that thousands of Yezidis, mostly women and children, were captured, while hundreds of men were killed. One of Survivors, Nadia Murad who was taken by ISIS, attended the US Senate in 2016 and laid the

number of those killed to be 3000 men, and more than 3000 women and girls and 1600 children were taken into captivity by the Islamic State group (Holz, 2017).

After the ISIS attack, Yazidi women and children were forced to leave their villages and escape to a dangerous place, becoming refugees to Turkey and forced to remain in camps (Ahram, 2015). On December 13, 2018, Donald Trump President Signed a new bill designed to supply dedicated U.S. provision right to the Christian and Yezidi victims of ISIS' operation of genocide (Christianpost.com).

## **5. Conclusion**

Attacking Yezidi community by Islamic States left various heart breaking implications on all levels, including several challenges socially and in terms of humanity. The importance of studying the issues is that it recounts that the Yezidi vs. Sunni Arab conflict operation of violence and sexual slavery was perpetrated by IS and supported by local Sunni Arab tribes. It is clear from this essay that the Yezidi minority of Iraq has been the victims of genocide and human trafficking by the Islamic State terrorist organization for financial gain, but even more significantly because of ideology, these endeavors are unintentionally making more than a modest impact. As a result, sexual control and ethnic hierarchy continue as long as the male-dominated state insists. The Iraq government, KRG, local and international humanitarian organizations must be serving to establish reparation programs according to international peremptory norms in this regard including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantee of non-repetition. The right to secure living fully humanly in Shingal should be considered the main security concern. The issue of liberating and emancipating all captive women and girls is a domestic and national responsibility that must be fulfilled. On the other hand, it increases to new tensions within the community during the return of Yezidi women and girls from captivity.

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