



Eleven Years Since Sinjar Attacks: UN Special Representative Pramila Patten Urges World Not to Forget Survivors of Da'esh's Brutal Sexual Violence

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New York, 1 August 2025: Eleven years after Da'esh's devastating attack on the Yazidi people in the Sinjar region of northern Iraq, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, urges the international community to renew its commitment to justice, recovery, and redress for Yazidis and other minority communities affected by these horrific crimes, which were used as tactics of terrorism.

On 3 August 2014, Da'esh launched a coordinated assault on Sinjar, killing thousands of members of the Yazidi community and abducting thousands of women and girls, who were subjected to rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced impregnation, trafficking, and other forms of brutal and systematic conflict-related sexual violence. To date, almost 2,600 Yazidis, in addition to women and girls from the Turkmen and Shabak communities, remain missing, with some reportedly trafficked to third countries where they remain held in captivity by Da'esh affiliates.

Today, survivors continue to suffer the deep and enduring consequences of these crimes. Many Yazidis and members of other minority communities remain in protracted displacement, facing ongoing social and economic marginalization. Others have returned to their communities of origin but face a lack of essential services to support their recovery. Stable security conditions, reconstruction, the restoration of basic services, and sustainable livelihood opportunities are essential for communities to be able to rebuild their lives in Sinjar in a safe and dignified manner. *"Although Da'esh has been militarily defeated, the trauma endures,"* said Special Representative Patten. *"Survivors have shown incredible resilience, and many have become civil society leaders. Yet, at the same time, many survivors and children born of rape continue to face immense obstacles to healing, justice, and socioeconomic reintegration. They must not be forgotten."*

In 2016, the Government of Iraq and the United Nations signed a Joint Communiqué committing to the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. Following the 2021 enactment of the landmark Yazidi Survivors Law, the Government of Iraq began providing reparations, which have now reached more than 2,000 survivors. *"I commend the important progress made by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to address the needs of survivors and ensure the rescue and return of those who remain missing to this day. Significant progress has been achieved, but more remains to be done,"* said Special Representative Patten. *"Accountability for sexual violence crimes in national courts remains elusive, and the fate of those still missing remains unknown. It is a moral imperative that these issues be addressed."*

Marking the solemn anniversary of the Sinjar attacks, Special Representative Patten reaffirmed her Office's continued solidarity with the survivors and affected communities, and support to the Government of Iraq. *"This harrowing chapter in Iraq's history must never be forgotten. Yet remembrance alone is not enough. The prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence is essential. Stability and reconstruction in Sinjar must be prioritized, and children born of rape must be guaranteed full legal protection,"* said Special Representative Patten. *"I also call on Member States to support Iraq's efforts to trace and return missing persons. Only bold and concrete action can truly honor those who have suffered so much and ensure that such crimes are never repeated."*

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