

Press Statement

Iraq under IS: In Sinjar, a Colossal Tragedy is Unfolding Before our Eyes!

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The Current Situation in Sinjar (Iraq): A Colossal Tragedy is Unfolding Before our Eyes!

Wadi calls the German Federal Government to provide support by all necessary means to help rescue Yazidis, Christians, Shabak, Turkman and other Iraqis of minority groups whose lives are in clear danger, and provide the Kurdish Regional Government with appropriate and practical assistance in their fight against terror.

In Sinjar, a colossal tragedy is unfolding before our eyes, while the world public remains indifferent. The terror organization Islamic State/ISIS has seized this region of northern Iraq, and virtually all of its inhabitants fled or have been murdered. Sinjar is home of the Yazidis, a religious group in Iraq, mistakenly decried among Muslims as “devil worshippers”. IS/ISIS terrorists leave them with the choice between conversion and death. The news outlet Slemani Times reports that 2600 men were already executed. Kurdpress reports 500 abducted women.

Tens of thousands of Sinjar’s residents hastily fled in convoys of cars, and tens of thousands more have made their way on foot to the nearby mountains. There they take refuge, defenceless, with no supply of food or water at 40C heat, on the bare mountains slopes. Numerous deaths are being reported, especially of children and the elderly, first to succumb to such extreme conditions. IS/ISIS jihadists surround the mountains chain, while Kurdish Peshmerga units try to break through to reach the refugees and protect them. Their number is not sufficient to ensure safety.

Iraqi Air Force helicopters have dropped food and water to aid the refugees trapped on the mountains. So far, however, this effort has yielded little result. The helicopters must fly at high altitude, for fear of surface-to-air missiles, as a result most of the supplies crash on the ground. In addition, from such high altitude it is hard to locate the refugees.

At the moment, a coordinate effort of Iraqi-Kurdish Peshmerga, Syrian-Kurdish YPG-militia and Iraqi Army troops is in motion in the area to push back IS/ISIS. We cannot, however, assume a swift victory and liberation of the trapped refugees. The battle can last weeks, and its results are uncertain.

If immediate international aid fails, tens of thousands of Yazidis face threat of painful death at the Sinjar Mountains. Some have already perished. Assistance must be provided immediately to the refugees trapped in the mountains, and to the Peshmerga better weapon and equipment to cope with the terrorists.

Germany’s Federal Foreign Office has refused a request from the Kurdish Regional Government for a delivery of military equipment. It was claimed that the parties should work to build a government in Baghdad with representation for Iraq’s various ethnic and religious groups. While such a government is, no doubt, an important objective on the long run, given the current urgency of the

situation, the denial of aid to the Kurdish Regional Government is questionable. Especially in view of the fact that the German government seems to have no qualms exporting weapons to some of IS/ISIS sponsors. With 673 million Euros worth military export to Qatar in 2013, it is second largest destination for German arms that year and Saudi Arabia is fourth largest with 361 million Euros worth of weapon exported.

We call the German Federal Government to provide support, by all necessary means, to help rescue Yazidis, Christians, Shabak, Turkman and other Iraqis of minority groups whose lives are in clear danger, and provide the Kurdish Regional Government with appropriate and practical assistance in their fight against terror.

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* <http://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/archives/3416>