



TAJE-Tevgera Azadiya Jinên Ezîdî
E-mail: taje03.08@gmail.com
Tel: [+9647803391050](tel:+9647803391050)

Sinjar, 17th of January 2021

His Holiness, Pope Francis
Palazzo Apostolico
00120 Città del Vaticano, Rome
Italy

Your Holiness,

As the Sinjar Women`s Council we would like to wish the Most Holy Father and all Christians a happy New Year. We hope that the year 2021 will be a year of peace, justice, equality and kinship – in short: a year of a dignified life – for all of humanity.

With great joy did we receive the news that the Most Holy Father will be visiting Iraq in March. We strongly believe that this visit will send a very important message of peace and affinity to all people in the region.

As a minority in Mesopotamia that follows an ancient belief, we Êzîdîs have lived in the region unnoticed by many for a long time. But this changed on August 3, 2014. On the morning of August 3, IS, the Islamic State – a symbolic expression of all existing evil – carried out the latest genocidal attack against our Êzîdî community and its main area of settlement in Iraq, Sinjar. While thousands of us were killed by IS, hundreds of us died during the following weeks from hunger and thirst after having fled from IS attacks to Mount Sinjar. Thousands of us were abducted by IS and sold on slave markets. About half a million of our people were forced to flee from Sinjar. Until today, a considerable number of us are struggling for survival under dire circumstances in various refugee camps.

Because of our ethnic and religious identity we have suffered the 74th ‘Ferman’ (order, attack to annihilate) in the course of our people’s history. We have been subjected to these kinds of attacks because we are different from other ethnic and religious groups in the region. Without a doubt, the ‘Ferman’ on August 3, 2014 has influenced us Êzîdîs deeply.

The IS ideology is known for its hostility towards women. It carries out a policy of genocide and femicide simultaneously.

IS had ordered its members to abduct and enslave us Êzîdî women by declaring us spoils of war. The reports of women who managed to escape from the IS hell constitute a shame for all of humanity in the 21st century. Even after five years, 3000 Êzîdî women are still being held hostage by IS. The Êzîdî women and children who were taken as hostages are subjected to physical and sexual assaults and a cultural genocide. In order to be granted the right to life they are forced to convert to Islam. This means forcing them to completely deny their own identity. Many of our sisters have tried to bring an end to their suffering in IS captivity by committing suicide. Some of us were crushed by all the atrocities. Understanding the shame suffered by others as our own has crushed us. Thousands of us lost our love for life when we were still 13 or 14 years old. Life has become a nightmare for us. Our loved ones were murdered barbarically or tortured terribly in

front of us.

As a response to these experiences, most of us have pledged to not surrender, to stay on our feet no matter what, to heal our wounds and to survive this threat of genocide. Thus, despite all the impositions we have not left our land and have begun to restructure ourselves based on social solidarity by clinging together even more. The immediate experience of genocide has underlined our need for self-defense and self-administration. Therefore, we have built up our self-defense and self-administration with our own hands in order to never again end up unprotected against new attacks. Especially as women we have understood the great need for this after the heavy sacrifices and pain we have experienced.

We want to speak our language and live our belief and culture on our own land together with our society.

Without a doubt, the historic visit to Iraq of the Most Holy Father will not only be a visit to the Christian groups in the country.

Our region has experienced continuous crisis and chaos ever since 2002. The wars in the region are covered with ethnic and religious characteristics. People are being mixed up in religious and sectarian wars.

The philosophy of our Êzîdî belief is summed up in our following prayer: 'May God protect the 72 people first and only then protect us.' As exemplified by this prayer, we have never been a community that puts itself at the center, considers itself standing above others or excludes other identities. To the contrary, we are a society that considers giving priority to others and their well-being an essential part of our own welfare. All peoples, beliefs and cultures have the right to freely live and express their own identities. This right is as much our right, as it is the right of all other peoples and beliefs. It is another characteristic of our belief, that we care for nature just as much as we care for the human.

A visit to us – a community of faith that has experienced genocide – by the Most Holy Father during his stay in Iraq would show us that we are not alone with our pain. It would also convey the necessary message to the fascist forces that mix up people into conflicts based on their differences.

As the Sinjar Women's Council, we would like to invite the Most Holy Father to Sinjar. We are doing this for all our sisters that are still being held hostage by IS. And we are doing this to show all the dark forces, e.g. IS, which doesn't grant women and different identities the right to live, that everybody's life with all their different identities is holy. It is holy, because the Creator has made us part of the Garden of Eden here on earth by creating us in all kinds of different forms. We are inviting the Most Holy Father to Sinjar to make our hope for peace, freedom and fellowship visible. To ask the Most Holy Father to show that what we have experienced finds no approval before God.

If it is not possible for the Most Holy Father to come to Sinjar, we hope that it will be possible for Him to accept a visit by a Women's delegation from Sinjar.

With every good wish to Your Holiness, we are, Sincerely Yours,



Sabiha Sabri
Yazidi Women's Movement