



Free Yezidi Foundation¹ Statement

29 April 2019

Netherlands Immigration Authorities to Deport Yezidi Asylum Seekers

The Free Yezidi Foundation rejects the decision by the Netherlands IND, or immigration authority, to begin deporting Yezidi asylum seekers who have fled from Iraq.

The Free Yezidi Foundation, which is a Netherlands-based charity, is generally supportive of the government of the Netherlands. The Netherlands has a long-standing tradition of promoting humanitarian and human rights values. For this reason, the Free Yezidi Foundation finds the IND decision shocking.

The IND claims that because there is enough food and shelter in the IDP camps in Iraq, the Netherlands is justified in refusing Yezidi asylum seekers. This decision callously and surprisingly ignores the obvious dangers that Yezidis have faced and continue to face in Iraq. It has been widely recognized that Yezidis suffered a genocide at the hands of the Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh).² Yezidis did not flee because of a lack of food and shelter or the difficulty of daily life in Iraq. They fled because they were at risk of eradication based on their unique religion.

The UNHCR has rightly criticised the decision of the Netherlands to refuse asylum cases and commence deportation of Yezidi asylum seekers back to Iraq. Unlike other refugees from the Middle East and elsewhere, Yezidis are a vulnerable, targeted minority community, not fleeing to find economic opportunities or better livelihoods. The Yezidis have been attacked and massacred because of their religion for centuries, culminating in the latest attack from ISIS/Daesh. According to IND regulations, if an asylum seeker is a member of a vulnerable group, they should be protected under Dutch law and not be forcibly returned to the place of persecution. It is absolutely inaccurate to claim that Yezidis can safely return to Sinjar or elsewhere in Iraq at the moment and be guaranteed safety and the protection of their human rights. Yezidi asylum applications are categorically different from applications of other asylum seekers, given the genocide perpetrated against their people from 2014 onwards and the ongoing displacement of our people.

We call upon the IND, Netherlands Parliamentarians, and the Government of the Netherlands to reconsider this decision immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pari Ibrahim', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pari Ibrahim
Executive Director
Free Yezidi Foundation

For media inquiries, contact info@freeyezidi.org

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¹ The Free Yezidi Foundation is an apolitical Yezidi civil society organization based in the Netherlands dedicated to providing humanitarian and human rights assistance to Yezidis in need. FYF is led by Yezidi women.

² <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Iraq-Bearing-Witness-Report-111215.pdf> ;
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=20113&LangID=E>