

Debate Pack

CDP-0027 (2022)

By Philip Loft,
Nigel Walker

3 February 2022

Atrocities against the Yazidi religious community

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1 Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on Islamic State/Daesh atrocities against the Yazidi religious community is scheduled for Thursday 8 February 2022, from 9:30-11:00am. The debate will be led by Brendan O’Hara MP.

2 Background

The Yazidis are a religious minority, primarily residing in northern Iraq. In August 2014, they were attacked by Islamic State (IS), who then controlled significant amounts of territory in Iraq and Syria. In addition to attacks against the Yazidis, IS also targeted Christians, Turkmen, Shabaks, and other minorities.

In 2016 a [UN human rights panel](#) and the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, described IS actions against the Yazidis [as constituting genocide](#).¹ A further UN investigative team in 2021 concluded there was [“clear and convincing evidence” of genocide](#) against the group.² The UK Government has condemned the atrocities, but has a long-standing policy that any determination of genocide is [one for competent courts](#) (opens PDF), rather than governments.³

What happened in 2014?

In the summer of 2014, IS militants advanced through Iraq’s northern Sinjar province, where many Yazidis live. The [UN reports](#) that upon the arrival of IS in August 2014:

- Yazidi men and boys over twelve were separated from women and girls. IS executed men and older boys who refused to convert to Islam.
- Yazidi women and children were forcibly moved to holding sites. In one case, women aged over 60 were executed.
- Women and girls were also sold as slaves, and subject to sexual violence.⁴

¹ UN, [UN human rights panel concludes ISIL \[Islamic State of Syria and Levant\] committing genocide against Yazidis](#), 16 June 2016; CNN, John Kerry, [ISIS responsible for genocide](#), 18 March 2016. All sources accessed 31 January 2022

² UN, [ISIL crimes against Yazidis constitute genocide. UN investigation team finds](#), 10 May 2021

³ [Foreign Secretary to Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee](#), 8 December 2020

⁴ Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, [“They came to destroy”: ISIS crimes against the Yazidis](#), 2016, p8, 11

The total number of Yazidis captured, killed and missing is uncertain. In 2017, the UN estimated more than [5,000 were killed](#) and 7,000 girls and women were forced into sex slavery.⁵

Current situation for Yazidis

While IS has lost almost all its territory, its occupation has left a legacy.

In 2021, an estimated 200,000 Yazidis [remained displaced](#) from their homes, and 2,800 women and children were estimated to still be in IS captivity.⁶

Amnesty International report that many Yazidi children [continue to face mental and physical health problems](#) and experience difficulties in re-enrolling in school after missing several years of education.⁷

In March 2021, the Iraqi Parliament voted for the [Yazidi female survivor's law](#). This introduced a system of reparations for female survivors of IS campaigns who were subject to sexual violence and other forms of abuse.⁸

The UK Government has [supported implementation of the law](#) and is also funding psycho-social care for female minority survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.⁹

Recognising a genocide: UK Government position

One international definition of genocide is that of the [1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#).¹⁰

The UK Government has been encouraged to state that a genocide took place against the Yazidis. In 2016, the House of Commons divided 278 to 0 that [IS was committing genocide](#) against Christians, Yazidis, and other ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.¹¹

The UK Government's long-standing policy is that any determination of genocide is [one for competent courts](#) (opens PDF), rather than governments or non-judicial bodies. "Competent courts" include the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and national criminal courts that meet international standards of due process.¹²

⁵ Reuters, [Nearly 10,000 Yazidis killed, kidnapped by Islamic State in 2014, study finds](#), 9 May 2017

⁶ UN Security Council, [ISIL/Da'esh committed genocide of Yazidi \[...\] investigative team head tells security council](#), 10 May 2021

⁷ Amnesty, [Iraq: Legacy of terror: The plight of Yazidi child survivors of ISIS](#), 30 July 2020

⁸ Al-Jazeera, [Yazidi survivors of sexual violence await financial support](#), 8 November 2021

⁹ PQ HL2769 [[Yazidis: Missing persons](#)], 29 September 2021

¹⁰ UN Office on genocide prevention and the responsibility to protect, [The genocide convention](#)

¹¹ HC Deb, [Daesh: Genocide of minorities](#), 20 April 2016, c1000

¹² [Foreign Secretary to Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee](#), 8 December 2020

How could IS fighters be tried?

The ICC has [jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes](#). However, neither Syria or Iraq are subject to the [jurisdiction of the ICC](#), as they are not parties to the Rome Statute (the ICC's founding treaty).¹³ It is possible for the UN Security Council to refer cases directly to the ICC, but examples of this are rare. Individuals may also be tried by the ICC if they are the national of a state which is party to the court.¹⁴

Some European states have considered establishing an [international tribunal](#) to try IS fighters, but the suggestion has not made progress.¹⁵

The UK Government hopes that IS fighters are [tried in the most appropriate jurisdiction](#), which "is often" the region where the offences were committed.¹⁶ It has provided support to Kurdish and Iraqi authorities to help improve their judicial systems.¹⁷

First IS member found guilty of genocide in Germany, 2021

The UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Unitad) works to prepare evidence to support national authorities' efforts to prosecute IS members. In May 2021, it said it had [identified 1,444 potential perpetrators](#) (opens PDF) of attacks against the Yazidis.¹⁸

The UK Government has provided £2 million in funding to [support Unitad's work](#).¹⁹

Unitad has [worked with German prosecutors](#) who, in 2021, oversaw the world's first conviction of an IS member for genocide against the Yazidis.²⁰ In November, a German court found an Iraqi member of IS, Taha al-Jumailly, [guilty of genocide](#), crimes against humanity, war crimes, and human trafficking. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.²¹

Originally arrested in Greece, he was extradited to Germany and prosecuted under the international principle of [universal jurisdiction](#). This allows

¹³ ICC, [Statement of the prosecutor of the ICC, Fatou Bensouda, on the alleged crimes committed by ISIS](#), 8 April 2015

¹⁴ House of Commons Library, [Recent developments at the ICC](#), CBP 9067

¹⁵ European Council on Foreign Relations, [A tribunal for IS fighters?](#), 31 May 2019

¹⁶ HL Deb, [Displaced Yazidis and survivors of Daesh violence](#), 2 July 2019, c1337

¹⁷ PQ HL1699 [[Islamic State: Prosecutions](#)], 4 March 2020

¹⁸ [Letter from head of Unitad to the President of the Security Council](#) (opens PDF), 3 May 2021, para 10

¹⁹ PQ HL4527 [[Islamic state: Yazidis](#)], 14 December 2021

²⁰ UNITAD, [Briefing by Mr Christian Ritscher \[...\]](#), 2 December 2021

²¹ BBC News, [Yazidi genocide: IS member found guilty in German landmark trial](#), 30 November 2021

countries that recognise the principle to prosecute crimes that occurred beyond their country's borders, regardless of the perpetrator's nationality.²²

In response to a PQ that asked what assessment the UK Government had made of its use of universal jurisdiction to [prosecute crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity](#), the Government said in February 2022 that:

The Counter Terrorism Division within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is responsible for prosecuting core international crimes (genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes) and applies the principle of universal jurisdiction when necessary.

Universal jurisdiction helps to ensure that the UK does not provide a safe haven for war criminals or those who commit other serious violations of international law, and the CPS will continue to bring individuals to justice wherever possible. Any decision to prosecute offences of universal jurisdiction in England and Wales is governed by the same principles that apply to any other prosecution and must be in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.²³

²² International Centre for counter-terrorism, [Bringing \(foreign\) terrorist fighters to justice in a post-ISS landscape part II: Prosecution by foreign courts](#), 12 January 2018

²³ PQ HL5468 [[Crimes against humanity: Prosecutions](#)], 1 February 2022

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Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[We need better laws to prosecute atrocities in Syria](#)

Al Jazeera
Catherine Marchi-Uhel et al
13 January 2022

[Yazidi survivor Nadia Murad urges nations to copy Germany's prosecution of genocide](#)

The National
Nicky Harley
2 December 2021

[A step towards justice for the Yazidis: German court secures first ever conviction for the Daesh genocide](#)

Forbes
Dr Ewelina U. Ochab
30 November 2021

[The destruction of Yazidi heritage under ISIS: Report](#)

Rudaw
Alannah Travers
15 November 2021

[Massacred by Islamic State, Yazidis now face Turkish airstrikes](#)

The New Statesman
Ben van der Merwe
6 October 2021

[Iraq: 'Moral obligation' to ensure justice for Yazidi and other survivors of ISIL crimes](#)

UN News
30 September 2021

[ISIS slaughtered my Yazidi community. We don't want your pity – we want justice](#)

CNN
Nadia Murad
16 August 2021

[ICMP marks the 7th anniversary of Da'esh invasion of Sinjar with Yazidi NGOs in The Hague](#)

International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)
3 August 2021

[UN experts: Islamic State committed genocide against Yazidis](#)

AP News
Edith M. Lederer
11 May 2021

[ISIL crimes against Yazidis constitute genocide, UN investigation team finds](#)

UN News
10 May 2021

[Yazidis have been forgotten during Covid. They need justice, jobs and a return home](#)

The Guardian
Nadia Murad
24 February 2021

[Six years after genocide, international community must prioritize justice for Yazidi community](#)

UN News
3 August 2020

[Marking 5 years since IS attack on Yazidis](#)

VOA News
3 August 2019

[Iraq Yazidis: The 'forgotten' people of an unforgettable story](#)

BBC News Online
Lyse Doucet
5 September 2018

[MEPs: EU should recognise ISIS crimes against the Yazidi as genocide](#)

Euractive
Georgi Gotev
12 December 2017

[Three years since Islamic State attack, Yazidi wounds still open](#)

Reuters
Maher Chmaytelli
3 August 2017

[Netherlands, Belgium officially recognize Yazidi genocide](#)

Rudaw
Loyal Shakir
7 July 2017

[MPs unanimously declare Yazidis and Christians victims of Isis genocide](#)

The Guardian
Patrick Wintour
20 April 2016

[Why won't the government recognise Isis atrocities as genocide? I have a hunch](#)

The Guardian
Giles Fraser
19 April 2016

[Battle for Sinjar: Kurds 'advance on IS-held Iraqi town'](#)

BBC News Online
12 November 2015

[Our generation is gone: The Islamic State's targeting of Iraqi minorities in Ninewa](#) (PDF)

US Holocaust Memorial Museum
November 2015

[Iraqi Yazidis: Hazy population numbers and a history of persecution](#)

Pew Research Centre
Peter Henne and Conrad Hackett
12 August 2014

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Press releases

UK steps up support for Iraqi victims of ISIL

Department for International Development

29 September 2015

The UK will provide new life-saving support to tens of thousands of Iraqis forced to flee their homes by the brutal rise of ISIL, International Development Minister Desmond Swayne announced today.

Speaking during a visit to Iraq, Mr Swayne set out how £20 million in new funding from the UK would provide medical care, clean water and improved sanitation, shelter, cash support and other essentials to displaced Iraqis. He also warned that the international community should not forget Iraq when responding to the wider instability affecting neighbouring Syria.

More than 8 million people require humanitarian assistance inside Iraq, with 3.2 million Iraqis internally displaced by ongoing conflict - an increase of 1.5 million people in a year. With reports of cholera inside Iraq, provision of clean drinking water and improved sanitation is particularly important to help prevent a wider outbreak.

Desmond Swayne said:

We cannot separate out what is happening in Iraq from the instability gripping Syria and the wider region. The obscenities committed by ISIL show no respect for borders, just as they show no respect for creed or gender.

These terrorists torture and kill Muslims, Yazidis and Christians alike and enslave and brutalise girls and women - in direct violation of the teachings of the religion they purport to represent.

A year ago, the eyes of the world were fixed on the plight of thousands of people trapped on Mount Sinjar. A concerted, urgent international effort meant the difference between life and death for them. But as the number of displaced people in Iraq continues to grow daily, the world's gaze appears to have wandered.

The UN's latest appeal is seriously underfunded and we do not want to see more Iraqis being forced to move because they cannot get the help they need where they are. Donors must step up to meet the shortfall now, to prevent Iraq's problems spilling over its borders.

Mr Swayne was in Iraq to meet government, UN and NGO representatives and to visit camps to understand the challenges displaced Iraqis are facing and how UK aid is helping.

The new funding from the UK will go to the humanitarian community, through the UN and other trusted partners operating inside Iraq and is expected to deliver:

- cash assistance for over 50,000 vulnerable Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) so that they can pay for the things they need most, including food, rent and clothes
- food and essential household items such as kitchen kits to over 50,000 IDPs
- access to clean water for over 80,000 IDPs
- life-saving assistance for some of the most vulnerable groups in conflict-affected parts of Iraq through the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund

FCO Minister Tobias Ellwood marks Sinjar anniversary

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3 August 2015

Speaking today Mr Ellwood said:

A year ago, the UK's brave Armed Forces and aid workers played a crucial role in getting vital supplies to innocent civilians suffering at the hands of ISIL. The Yazidi community were exposed, starving and dying of thirst when they were forced up Mount Sinjar after fleeing from their homes. The UK Government conducted seven airdrops of life-saving humanitarian aid.

We will continue to protect all those persecuted by these brutal terrorists as part of a 63 nation coalition designed to defeat ISIL's poisonous ideology.

We acknowledge that we need to do more in the fight against violent Islamist extremism. Be in no doubt, we are committed to destroying the terrorist scourge of ISIL that threatens the lives of people from all communities in both Iraq and Syria. Defeating ISIL will take time and patience but it is a fight we must win.

FCO Minister appalled by reported murder of Yazidis

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3 May 2015

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

The reports of the murder of hundreds of Yazidis are shocking. If confirmed, they are yet another a sign of ISIL's utter depravity. We will continue to stand with the Government of Iraq as it works for the defeat of ISIL, and continue to support the creation of an Iraq safe for all its communities.

British aid for Yazidi refugees fleeing Mount Sinjar

Department for International Development

14 August 2014

The Department for International Development (DFID) is providing funding for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to provide a month's worth of water and medicine for the refugees. British funding for other aid agencies working in the Newroz refugee camp will support the distribution of hygiene kits to almost 4,000 men, women and children, ensuring refugees stay healthy and reducing the spread of disease.

A few weeks ago Newroz camp, in north-eastern Syria, was home to just 20 Syrian families displaced by the conflict in their country. But over the past week the IRC has been providing medical care and essential items to 12,000 people who have fled the mountain.

The Yazidi refugees walked up to 60km before reaching the camp, facing temperatures of up to 50 degrees and without water. To prevent refugees dying the IRC has distributed 90,000 litres of water and 600 jerry cans.

Justine Greening said:

These 12,000 Yazidi refugees have escaped a siege, walked 60km in 50 degree heat and found their way across the Syrian border to a refugee camp that used to house just 20 families.

They have shown immense courage to make it this far and we are extremely concerned for their wellbeing. By supporting the work of the International Rescue Committee, Britain will provide vital medicine and water to give immediate assistance.

Britain will continue to help the Yazidi people stranded on Mount Sinjar with airdrops of emergency aid.

Suzanna Tkalec, the International Rescue Committee's Country Director in Iraq, said:

Thanks to funding from the UK we were able to reach severely dehydrated refugees straight away.

We are still gravely concerned for the thousands of people still stranded on the Sinjar mountains. Those that have managed to escape are seriously debilitated after having spent days without water and food on temperatures that reach 50 degrees.

We want all the people still there to be safely extracted from the mountain and brought to a safe place where they can receive immediate assistance.

A Yazidi woman now living at the Newroz camp said:

I was in the Sinjar mountains for a week before I escaped. Now I am a volunteer with the IRC in the health tent. I write the prescriptions. The people who are coming from the mountains after me are in bad shape. They are dehydrated and have fevers.

The UK has also deployed a technical adviser to the Kurdistan Regional Government to boost their capacity to work with the UN and help ensure that assistance gets to those who need it most. Britain has already provided £3 million to four charities scaling up their efforts in the region.

UK humanitarian advisors are working closely with aid agencies in this region to assess what further assistance Britain can provide to help the hundreds of thousands of people affected by this crisis.

Justine Greening announced £8 million in new assistance for those displaced in Iraq on 8 August. This brings to £13 million the total committed by the UK in response to the crisis. This includes:

- £2 million of emergency humanitarian supplies for 75,000 people, including aid that can be air dropped to help those trapped in the Sinjar Mountains as quickly as possible. Supplies will include reusable filtration containers filled with clean water, tarpaulins and basic shelter equipment, and solar lights that can also recharge mobile phones to enable communication
- £3 million of fast-tracked funding for Mercy Corps, the IRC, who are already on the ground and helping displaced people in northern Iraq. This will go via DFID's Rapid Response Facility, which has now been activated to deal with the crisis
- £2.5 million of support for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide immediate medical and humanitarian assistance
- a further £500,000 that will ensure Kurdish and UN systems are able to coordinate and respond to humanitarian needs in the region

[David Cameron statement on Iraq](#)

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing St

8 August 2014

Prime Minister David Cameron said:

I am extremely concerned by the appalling situation in Iraq and the desperate situation facing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. And I utterly condemn the barbaric attacks being waged by ISIL terrorists across the region.

I am especially concerned for the minority Yazidi community now trapped on Mount Sinjar, where they have fled for their lives. They fear slaughter if they descend back down the slopes but face starvation and dehydration if they

remain on the mountain. The world must help them in their hour of desperate need.

Last night, the UK chaired a meeting of the United Nations Security Council to ensure a strong international response to the crisis and this morning the Defence Secretary will chair a COBR on the issue. I have tasked officials to urgently establish what more we can do to provide help to those affected, including those in grave need of food, water and shelter in the Sinjar area.

I welcome President Obama's decision to accept the Iraqi government's request for help and to conduct targeted US airstrikes, if necessary, to help Iraqi forces as they fight back against ISIL terrorists to free the civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar. And I fully agree with the President that we should stand up for the values we believe in – the right to freedom and dignity, whatever your religious beliefs.

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PQs

Yazidis: Missing Persons

31 Jan 2022 | 109226

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking with its international counterparts to help trace missing Yazidi women.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK supports the implementation of Iraq's Yazidi Survivors law of March 2021, which includes provisions to search for missing survivors. We engage regularly with partner Governments, NGOs, survivor networks and Iraqi Government ministries to advocate for full financial provision of the law. Through the FCDO's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI) project funding, the UK is providing £70,000 to the International Organisation for Migration to provide technical and practical assistance to the Directorate of Yazidi Survivor Affairs, to ensure full implementation of the law. UK programme funding also supports psycho-social care for female survivors of conflict related sexual violence.

Islamic State: Yazidis

14 Dec 2021 | HL4527

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the briefing by Mr Karim Asad Ahmad Khan QC, published on 10 May, setting out the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability Against Da'esh/ISIL Crimes' (UNITAD) (1) findings of "clear and convincing evidence that genocide was committed by ISIL against the Yazidi as a religious group", and (2) statement that "The intent of ISIL to destroy the Yazidi, physically and biologically, is manifest in its ultimatum – applied remorselessly to all members of their community – to convert or die"; and what assessment they have made of the letter sent by Mr Khan QC to the President of the Security Council on 3 May stating that UNITAD had identified 1,444 potential perpetrators of attacks against the Yazidi community.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We condemn in the strongest terms the atrocities committed by Daesh against all civilians, including Yazidis and other minorities, as well as the majority Muslim population in Syria and Iraq. We note the conviction in a

German court on 30 November of a former Daesh fighter for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We will continue to use our position at the UN, including as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to raise atrocity situations of concern and to support the deployment of all appropriate tools available to the UN in dealing with potential mass atrocities and conflict. Our focus is always on securing an end to violence and protecting civilians.

The UK has contributed £2 million to the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD), to gather evidence of Daesh crimes in Iraq. We continue to champion, and are committed to, UNITAD's work in gathering evidence of crimes. The UK contributes to the implementation of Iraq's Yazidi Survivor's law which was passed in March 2021 and we continue to work with a wide range of actors to ensure full implementation.

Yazidis: Crimes against the Person

14 Dec 2021 | HL4526

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to recognise crimes committed against the Yazidis as genocide.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We condemn in the strongest terms the atrocities committed by Daesh against all civilians, including Yazidis and other minorities, as well as the majority Muslim population in Syria and Iraq. We note the conviction in a German court on 30 November of a former Daesh fighter for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We will continue to use our position at the UN, including as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to raise atrocity situations of concern and to support the deployment of all appropriate tools available to the UN in dealing with potential mass atrocities and conflict. Our focus is always on securing an end to violence and protecting civilians.

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Topical Questions

26 Oct 2021 | 702 c138

Asked by: Fiona Bruce

We know that 2,763 Yazidi women, girls and children are still missing, seven years after they were abducted by Daesh in Iraq. Many were taken as sexual slaves and child soldiers. Will the Minister meet me and members of the all-party parliamentary group for international freedom of religion or belief to review what action the UK can take to support the call to assist those people by members of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance this week?

Answered by: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I thank my hon. Friend for her important question and for all the work she does in this area. This Government and I are committed to freedom of religion or belief and to the protection of women and girls, and I would be happy to discuss with her this issue and the wider issues of concern in this area.

Yazidis: Missing Persons

29 Sep 2021 | HL2769

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to locate missing Yazidi women and children following the genocide of Yazidis by ISIL in 2014.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We continue to press the Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Governments for more progress on security and services in the liberated areas of Iraq and to solve disputed internal boundaries. The passage of the Yazidi Survivors Law in March 2021 is a welcome first step toward justice and reparations for survivors of Daesh atrocities. This law also includes provisions to search for missing survivors. The UK is supporting the implementation of the law, including through support to the Directorate for Survivors Care. We are also funding psycho-social care for female minority survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Iraq.

Islamic State

23 Sep 2021 | 51717

Asked by: Brendan O'Hara

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking (a) independently and (b) jointly with (i) her

international counterparts and (ii) international bodies to help ensure that victims of Daesh atrocities are provided with reparations.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is a key ally to survivor and minority communities who suffered atrocities under Daesh. We played a leading role in the establishment of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD). We champion its work in gathering evidence of crimes, including sexual violence against minority communities and welcome its expanded engagement with witnesses, survivors and impacted communities. Our Embassy in Baghdad has regular discussions with the Government of Iraq and UNITAD, encouraging their closer co-operation to achieve justice for victims of Daesh's crimes.

The passage of the Yazidi Survivors Law in March 2021, which includes provisions to search for missing survivors, is a welcome step toward justice and reparations for survivors. We continue to work with a range of actors including the Government of Iraq, minorities' organisations and survivors to ensure this law is fully implemented. We are funding both psycho-social care for female survivors of conflict related sexual violence, and technical support to Iraq's Directorate of Yazidi Affairs, responsible for implementation of the law.

Islamic State: Genocide

17 May 2021 | 331

Asked by: Nusrat Ghani

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the conclusions of the UNITAD investigations led by Karim Khan QC, if the Government will use the term genocide in connection with atrocities perpetrated by ISIL against Yazidis and other minorities in Northern Iraq and Syria.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government's long standing policy is that any determination of genocide should only be made by competent courts, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies.

In order to support the prosecution of Daesh crimes in Iraq, the UK has contributed nearly £2 million to the UN Investigative Team for the Accountability of Daesh (UNITAD) and is encouraging close co-operation between UNITAD and the Government of Iraq to achieve justice for Daesh's victims.

Iraq: Internally Displaced People

20 Jul 2020 | HL6552

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council in the report Visit to Iraq: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, published on 13 May, what discussions they intend to have with the government of Iraq about (1) adopting "a comprehensive legal and policy framework to address the situation of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, many of whom remain in displacement, including by providing reparation through a comprehensive, inclusive and survivor centred reparation programme and expanding the proposed Yazidi reparations law and survivors' grants" and (2) undertaking "comprehensive dialogue with communities affected by ISIL atrocities, in particular ethnic and religious minorities, to establish transitional justice mechanisms, to seek the truth about violations and to provide reparation, rebuilding trust between the population and the State and providing institutional guarantees of non-repetition".

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK is committed to championing wider restorative justice efforts for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and holding perpetrators to account. The UK has provided significant support to survivors of sexual violence in Iraq. Our Embassy in Baghdad has regular discussions with the Government of Iraq and the UN Investigative Team for the Accountability of Daesh (UNITAD), encouraging close co-operation between them to achieve justice for the victims of Daesh's crimes in Iraq. We welcome the fact that UNITAD is expanding its engagement with witnesses, survivors and impacted communities.

We are supporting the development of inclusive and representative reconciliation processes, involving Yazidis and other minorities who faced appalling suffering under Daesh, at both national and community levels in Iraq. We also remain committed to supporting Iraq to prevent Daesh resurgence, as the Foreign Secretary reaffirmed to new Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein on 25 June.

Iraq: Yazidis

22 May 2020 | 46798

Asked by: Anthony Mangnall

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he plans to make to the recently appointed Prime Minister of Iraq on support for Yazidi people in Iraq.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We welcome the appointment of Mustafa al-Kadhimi as Prime Minister of Iraq. The UK is committed to supporting the new Government to address the significant economic, security, health and human rights challenges facing Iraq. As part of this we will urge the protection of minorities, including the Yazidi people, in our engagements with the new Government and emphasise the importance of reconstruction and reconciliation in those areas liberated from Daesh.

Yazidis

03 Oct 2019 | 290777

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support his Department is providing to (a) promote truth and reconciliation and (b) prevent the re-emergence of conflict between Yazidi people who have returned to their home areas in Iraq and non-Yazidi people living in those areas.

Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK is supporting the development of inclusive and representative reconciliation processes, involving Yazidis and other minorities, at both national and community levels in Iraq, through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. We have also contributed £23.5 million to the UN's Funding Facility for Stabilisation, which is helping to rebuild and develop inclusive local governance in areas liberated from Daesh, including those to which Yazidis are returning. To support the efforts to promote the truth of Daesh's crimes, in July we announced a further £1 million to the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh which is investigating, among other incidents, the atrocities committed against the Yazidi community in Sinjar province.

Middle East: Yazidis

02 Oct 2019 | 290299

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support the Government provides to survivors of sexual violence among the Yazidi people in Iraq and Syria.

Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK has provided significant support to survivors of sexual violence, including Yazidis, in both Iraq and Syria.

Besides humanitarian assistance, UK support to survivors of sexual violence in Iraq has been primarily through the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh (UNITAD), to which the UK has contributed £2 million. UNITAD has a stand-alone Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Children's Unit, created to address the unique gender aspects of Daesh crimes; a Victim and Witness Support Unit, which has developed a strategy to incorporate safeguards and protections for vulnerable groups; and psychologists to provide support to victims and witnesses.

In Syria we have supported many efforts to assist survivors of sexual violence. These include projects to map and vet support services for survivors of sexual violence; train doctors to provide forensic medical reports; produce in depth case files on the Daesh slave trade; and train first responders for child and adult survivors. We have also allocated nearly £30 million to the UN Population Fund to help reduce and mitigate gender-based violence and provide life-saving sexual and reproductive health services.

As part of the UK's continued global leadership on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, the UK will host an International Conference in November entitled "Time for Justice: Putting Survivors First" to galvanise the world into further action.

Middle East: Yazidis

02 Oct 2019 | 290296

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) physical safety and (b) human rights of members of Yazidi communities from Iraq and Syria that have (i) returned and (ii) sought to return to their home areas.

Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

British Embassy Baghdad made an assessment in May 2019 on the situation of Yazidis that were returning or seeking to return to their home areas. This was informed by a visit by the British Ambassador to Baghdad, Jon Wilks, to Yazidi areas of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and discussions with Yazidi leaders and IDPs. The principal Yazidi concerns as expressed to the Embassy were physical safety, including related to the behaviour of state security actors; justice for the victims of Daesh; and restoration of services, including reconstruction and psycho-social support. We continue to encourage and support progress on all these issues.

Iraq: Yazidis

25 Mar 2019 | HL14578

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to (1) establish what has happened to the estimated 3,000 missing Yazidis displaced by IS, and (2) to help the Yazidi population, in particularly Yazidi women and children, to rebuild their communities.

Answering member: Lord Bates | Department for International Development

The UK is committed to supporting women and girls who have been victims of sexual violence and that those responsible are brought to justice. We are pushing for justice and accountability for all victims of Daesh. This includes leadership in ensuring the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2379 on Daesh Accountability, and contributing £1m to support the establishment of a UN investigative team (UNITAD) that will collect evidence of Daesh crimes in Iraq.

UK aid has enabled the UN Trust Fund to support the Free Yazidi Foundation, a women's and children's centre that provides safety and support for women who have suffered at the hands of Daesh. Furthermore, the UK has contributed over £23 million to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS), to help the Iraqi Government stabilise areas of return and re-establish security, basic services and inclusive local governance. UNDP and partners of the FFS regularly consult religious and community leaders in areas in which it is operating, to understand return trends and develop strategies to address the barriers that impact on the decision of families to return and rebuild their communities. In addition to this, in January, DFID announced the allocation of a further £5 million to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). This funding is to support six explosive clearance teams across the country's Sinjar Province to clear explosives from critical areas such as schools, hospitals and roads, which will improve the conditions for communities to return home safely.

Turkey: Kurds and Yazidis in Syria

23 May 2018 | 791 c1030

Asked by: Lord Elystan-Morgan

Fifty years ago, Parliament passed the Genocide Act. Unnatural modesty forbids me from mentioning the name of the person who piloted it through the House of Commons. How seriously do we take our obligations under that statute? Do we regard it as part of living law from day to day?

Answered by: Baroness Goldie | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We take all obligations in respect of alleged breaches of international law very seriously, and we have always regarded the United Nations as an important forum for addressing these issues. The United Kingdom believes that allegations of genocide are for international judicial authorities to determine. As the noble Lord is probably aware, the International Criminal Court does not have territorial jurisdiction over crimes committed in Syria, because Syria is not a state party to the Rome statute.

Islamic State: War Crimes

31 Oct 2017 | HL2161

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Investigative Team investigates cases of individuals forcibly displaced by Daesh in Iraq, including of Iraqi Christians from Nineveh Plains and of Yazidis from Sinjar.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Under UNSCR 2379, the mandate of the Investigative Team (Iraq) will be to support domestic efforts to hold Da'esh accountable by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The UK is supporting efforts to secure justice for all Da'esh's victims.

Iraq: Yazidis

30 Oct 2017 | 109170

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to assist the UN inquiry on genocide against Yazidis in Iraq.

Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

There is a growing body of evidence that Daesh has committed appalling crimes against minority communities in Iraq, including Yazidis, and we are working with our international partners to ensure that those responsible are held to account. On 21 September 2017, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the UK-drafted Daesh Accountability Resolution 2379, co-sponsored by 46 Member States, including Iraq. The resolution calls for the UN Secretary General to establish an Investigative Team to collect, preserve and store evidence of Daesh crimes, beginning in Iraq. The team will be led by a Special Adviser with a mandate to promote the need to bring Daesh to justice across the globe.

Iraq: Refugees

24 Oct 2017 | HL1881

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that vulnerable Iraqi refugees from Yazidi, Christian and Shia minority groups have the same access to international assistance, such as the right to work, education and asylum, that has been offered to Syrian refugees.

Answering member: Lord Bates | Department for International Development

This year the UK will provide £40 million for urgent humanitarian assistance in Iraq and over £25 million of support for UN stabilisation efforts, including support for the Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to help rebuild communities affected by Daesh, including for minority communities in newly liberated areas in Iraq. The FFS is currently implementing 171 projects in Christian communities and 80 in Yazidi areas. 746,000 Iraqis from minority communities will benefit from these stabilisation projects when they return home in the months ahead. DFID delivery partners have clear guidelines in place following international humanitarian laws which prevent discrimination in the delivery of aid.

Genocide

26 Jun 2017 | 783 c152

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

Will [the noble Baroness] confirm that it is now 14 months since the House of Commons designated the atrocities in Iraq and Syria—committed against Yazidis, Christians and other minorities—to be a genocide, this crime above all crimes? What progress has been made in collecting court-ready evidence and in referring those responsible to the International Criminal Court, to which she referred, or to a regional tribunal? If accountability and justice in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Sudan and North Korea are to be credible, should we not be giving this matter greater priority and urgency to ensure that we see no compromising of the gold standard of the ICC?

Answered by: Baroness Goldie | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I thank the noble Lord. He raises an important point and I reiterate that the United Kingdom's support for international criminal justice is based on the principle that there must be no impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The International Criminal Court has been making good progress, as the noble Lord is probably aware, in the prosecution of persons alleged to have committed crimes. Indeed, 2016 was the court's most productive year for judicial output, with seven convictions in three cases.

In relation to the gathering of evidence from Iraq and Syria, the UK provides financial support to a specialist organisation to conduct investigations in Syria and build prosecution-ready criminal case files against the high-level perpetrators, in accordance with international standards. The noble Lord may be aware that last year the United Kingdom funded a project through our Magna Carta fund to improve the documentation of sexual violence and other gender-based cases in a victim-sensitive way in several areas of Iraq. That has assisted in the development of cases in which so many women from, for example, Christian and Yazidi communities have suffered.

Genocide

26 Jun 2017 | 783 c153

Asked by: Lord Elton

My noble friend referred to a process which it is necessary for any incident to go through before it can be recognised as within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Has the case of the Yazidis and Christians in Syria been through that process—and, if so, can the pursuit of that case be accelerated?

Answered by: Baroness Goldie | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

At the end of the day, it is for the International Criminal Court, as an independent institution, with its prosecutor, to make all decisions relative to the prosecution of crimes within its jurisdiction. On the basis of information being provided, I am absolutely certain that the court and the prosecutor will want to do everything within their power to pursue allegations where there are serious concerns such as those referred to by my noble friend.

Islamic State: Genocide

20 Sep 2016 | 46227

Asked by: Diana Johnson

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding has been provided to the (a) Kurdistan Regional Government Peshmerga, (b) Kurdish government in Northern Syria and (c) Yazidi community to (i) gather evidence of alleged acts of genocide and (ii) support displaced persons in refugee camps.

Answering member: James Wharton | Department for International Development

Since June 2014, DFID has committed £129.5 million in humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable internally displaced people in Iraq, including Yazidis and those living in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. To date, the UK has pledged over £2.3 billion in response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria

and the region. Our support is reaching vulnerable and displaced Syrians, including those living in areas controlled by Kurdish groups.

On 21 July the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK will lead a global campaign to hold Daesh to account for its crimes. In Iraq, the Foreign Office has funded projects to support the documentation of Daesh crimes and preservation of evidence. In Syria, UK funding supports a range of NGO partners to compile case files of evidence of atrocities approximating to International Criminal Court (ICC) standards.

DFID has not provided funding to the Peshmerga, or to the governing authorities in Kurdish-dominated parts of Syria.

Islamic State: Genocide

05 Sep 2016 | 43364

Asked by: Hilary Benn

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to act upon the Resolution of the House of 20 April 2016 on the recognition of genocide by Daesh against Yazidis, Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Government shares the House of Common's condemnation of Daesh atrocities and we remain very concerned about appalling crimes committed against Christians, Mandeans, Yezidis and other minorities, as well as the majority Muslim populations in Iraq and Syria. Daesh's victims, whether in Iraq and Syria or elsewhere in the world, must receive justice. This is why the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), announced on 21 July that the UK will work with our international partners to drive a global campaign to hold Daesh to account for its crimes.

Islamic State

29 Jul 2016 | HL1255

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they now recognise that a genocide is underway against minorities in Syria and Iraq; and whether the opinion set out in The Sunday Telegraph on 27 March that ISIS "are engaged in what can only be called genocide of the poor Yazidis" by the new Foreign Secretary reflects their official position.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

This Government shares the House of Commons' condemnation of Daesh atrocities against all civilians, including Christians, Mandeans, Yazidis, and other minorities, as well as the majority Muslim population in Iraq and Syria who continue to bear the brunt of Daesh's brutality.

It is a long-standing Government policy that any judgements on whether genocide has occurred are a matter for the international judicial system rather than governments or other non-judicial bodies. Our approach is to seek an end to all violations, and to prevent their further escalation, irrespective of whether these violations fit the definition of specific international crimes.

We are fully committed to working internationally to ensure Daesh is held to account for its crimes. Ultimately, the best way of preventing future atrocities is to defeat Daesh and its violent ideology. That is why the UK is playing a leading role in the Global Coalition of more than 66 countries and international organisations united to defeat Daesh.

Yazidi Population: Syria and Iraq

24 May 2016 | 611 c384

Asked by: Liz Saville Roberts

The Yazidi people of Iraq were given two choices by Daesh in 2014—convert or die. Will the UK Government accept that what happened in Sinjar was genocide, and urge the Iraqi Government to work with the International Criminal Court to bring murderers and rapists to justice?

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The hon. Lady raises an important point. Britain stepped forward, along with other countries, to make sure that we were able to provide airdrops and safe passage on Mount Sinjar, which were critical to support for the Yazidis. Her question has been debated at length in this Chamber and I very much support her views, together with John Kerry and the European Parliament, and this Parliament voted on the matter. However, it is not for us to make those judgments; it is for the International Criminal Court. We are helping to collect the evidence to make sure that when the time is appropriate, we can bring those people to justice.

Yazidi Population: Syria and Iraq

24 May 2016 | 611 c385

Asked by: Diana Johnson

The Minister has just repeated the arguments he made to the House on 20 April against referring the genocide of the Yazidi people to the UN Security Council, which this House unanimously rejected. The Minister's arguments have been challenged in the other place, where the noble Lord Pannick QC pointed out that article VIII of the convention on the prevention of genocide explicitly gives the UK Government the power to make such a referral. May I press the Minister to respect the will of this House and refer the matter to the UN Security Council without further delay?

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I very much join in the spirit of the hon. Lady's remarks, but we have to work within the mechanics of such a referral. We took the initiative to bring the situation to the awareness of the International Criminal Court in 2014. Our efforts were vetoed by two permanent members of the Security Council. That will happen again unless we are able to provide the necessary evidence, which is exactly what we are doing. We will hold those people to account, but there is an order and a process that we must honour. I entirely agree with the spirit of what the hon. Lady wants to do.

Islamic State

03 May 2016 | HL7816

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Anelay of St Johns to the private notice question from Lord Alton of Liverpool on 21 April, which members of the United Nations Security Council they believe would veto a referral to the International Criminal Court of evidence of genocide against Christian, Yazidi and other minorities in Iraq and Syria.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor set out some of the complicated issues involved in the ICC investigating Daesh in her press statement of 8 April 2015. It is not possible to refer Daesh itself to the ICC. Any referral would cover ALL potential crimes against international humanitarian law within a specified geographic area, rather than a specified organisation or set of actors.

When efforts were made to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC in 2014, it was vetoed by Russia and China. We expect that any Security Council resolution at this time seeking to refer the situations in Iraq or Syria to the ICC would likewise be blocked.

Islamic State

01 Apr 2016 | HL7122

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will respond to, and what is their assessment of, the statement by the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, that Daesh is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yazidis and Christians.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The US Secretary of State, John Kerry, is right to draw attention to the appalling crimes Daesh are committing, both against minority groups and Muslims. We will continue to work closely with the US and our other partners in the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh and to ensure justice for those who have suffered at their hands. It is a long standing UK policy that any judgement on whether genocide has occurred should be a matter for judicial decision, rather than for governments. As Secretary of State Kerry said, "ultimately, the full facts must be brought to light by an independent investigation and through formal legal determination made by a competent court or tribunal."

Daesh: Genocide

09 Feb 2016 | 768 c2119

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

My Lords, what is the point of Britain being a signatory to the 1948 genocide convention if, when compelling evidence emerges of mass graves, systematic executions, abduction, rape, enslavement and the forced conversion of minorities such as Yazidis and Christians—evidence sufficient to convince the European Parliament and the Council of Europe—the United Kingdom declines to name this horrific cruelty for the genocide that it is? Do we intend to ignore these resolutions, or will we take them to the Security Council and seek a referral to the International Criminal Court or a regional tribunal, so that those responsible for these heinous crimes will one day be brought to justice?

Answered by: The Earl of Courtown | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The noble Lord, Lord Alton, describes these crimes quite rightly as heinous. He also suggested that we took this matter to the UN Security Council, but it would be for the Security Council as a whole to agree. The UN Security Council has already taken a number of steps against Daesh, for example the binding resolutions against it which seek to reduce its ability to finance its activities and cut the flow of foreign fighters. However, whether or not this is ever designated as genocide does not stop this country's determination to deliver aid to those people in that situation.

Yazidis: Females

01 Feb 2016 | HL5228

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking on behalf of enslaved Yazidi women who have been sold on to other Islamic countries; what assessment they have made of the countries to which such women have been transported; and what plans they have to help recover those women from those countries, in particular Turkey.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

In the last few years, the UK has led the world on tackling sexual violence in conflict, working with international partners such as the UN, EU and Red Cross. In the Middle East, we are supporting vulnerable women and girls through our role in the international humanitarian relief effort. The more than £1.1 billion we are providing in response to these crises is the UK's largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

Turkey makes a critical contribution to the international campaign against Daesh as a key member of the Global Coalition, including by co-chairing the Coalition's Foreign Terrorist Fighters working group. It continues to take steps to tackle smuggling into and out of Daesh-controlled territory across its border with Syria.

Ultimately, the only way to protect civilians, including Yazidi women, from Daesh is by defeating this terrible organisation, which in turn requires, amongst other things, ending the conflict in Syria. The UK has been at the forefront of these efforts. The Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (David Cameron), set out the Government's comprehensive strategy for dealing with Daesh and the conflict in Syria in his response to the Foreign Affairs Committee on 26 November 2015.

Iraq: Genocide

07 Dec 2015 | HL4065

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the discovery of a booby-trapped mass grave in northern Iraq is evidence of genocide against minorities such as Yazidis and Assyrian Christians.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are aware of reports that mass graves have been discovered in northern Iraq, at least one of which was allegedly booby trapped by Daesh. We

condemn in the strongest terms the targeting and persecution of Yazidis, Christians and other communities by this brutal terrorist organisation.

We continue to urge the Government of Iraq to do all it can to ensure the security and rights of all communities in Iraq. We are working in Iraq to build consensus around the importance of freedom of religion or belief; and supporting practical projects on community dialogue with civil society and faith groups.

The British Government believes that recognition of genocides should be a matter for international courts. It should be a legal, rather than political determination, decided by international judges after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible international judicial process.

ISIL

23 Feb 2015 | 593 c11

Asked by: Mary Macleod

Will my right hon. Friend reassure me and many constituents who have written to me in the past few months that the Government are doing all they can to support and protect minority groups, such as Yazidi Christians, especially women, who face unimaginable dangers from ISIL brutality?

Answered by: Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

Yazidi Christians, particularly women, have suffered more than most at the hands of ISIL. They are not alone. ISIL is a terrorist organisation that brutally beheads and crucifies people, slaughters children, sells women as slaves and has systematically used rape as a weapon. We flew supplies and surveillance missions last year to help Yazidi refugees on Sinjar mountain. Since beginning air strikes last September, we have, with other coalition partners, hit ISIL positions that have threatened Yazidi refugees and have assisted the Kurdish peshmerga in pushing back and reclaiming territory from ISIL, which, in turn, helps the Yazidi population.

Middle East

18 Dec 2014 | 218552

Asked by: Richard Graham

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department has taken to assist Yazidi women in Iraq and Syria who have been kidnapped by ISIS.

Answering member: Justine Greening | Department for International Development

The current security situation and the deliberate blocking of aid by ISIL have made it extremely difficult for us or our partners to access ISIL controlled areas.

We condemn the brutal human rights abuses perpetrated by ISIL, including reports of the trafficking and kidnapping of Yezidi women. The UK government is committed, as part of an international coalition, to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL.

UK humanitarian aid has been helping many victims who have managed to escape ISIL's atrocities, including through the protection of vulnerable groups and through meeting the specific needs of displaced women and girls. In Dahuk in Northern Iraq, where many Yezidi women have fled to, our partners are providing psychosocial and community outreach support for survivors of sexual and gender based violence.

Turkey

10 Dec 2014 | 217189

Asked by: Katy Clark

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she has taken to ensure that aid to Syrian and Iraqi refugees reaches Kurdish and Yazidi refugees living in Suruc Municipality in Turkey.

Answering member: Justine Greening | Department for International Development

We have pledged £700 million to date in response to the crisis in Syria and the wider region, of which £24.2 million has been allocated to partners working inside Turkey in response to the refugee influx. DFID assistance is based on responding to need irrespective of ethnicity.

Iraq

07 Nov 2014 | 213228

Asked by: Gareth Thomas

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assistance her Department is giving to the Yazidi people; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Desmond Swayne | Department for International Development

In August, the UK conducted seven air drops to provide life-saving aid to Yazidi people trapped on Mount Sinjar. Through these airdrops, DFID provided

over 80 tonnes of aid, including 9,400 reusable water purification containers filled with clean water, 1,000 solar lanterns, and 1,000 shelter kits for the people stranded on the mountain.

In addition, DFID has provided £17.5 million of funding to UN agencies, NGO partners and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This funding will allow partners to provide basic life-saving assistance, including food, shelter, water, sanitation and medical care. Our aid is reaching displaced people across Iraq, including in the Kurdish region, where many Yazidis have fled to.

6

Debates

[Daesh: Genocide of Minorities](#)

20 Apr 2016 | House of Commons | 608 cc957-997

Agreed to on division (278 to 0).

[Daesh: Persecution of Christians](#)

22 Mar 2016 | House of Commons | 607 cc541-9WH

7

Statements

Formal Government recognition of the Daesh atrocities against Yazidis, Christians and other persecuted minorities as genocide

EDM 761 (session 2021-22)

9 December 2021

Brendan O'Hara

That in April 2016 this House recognised the Daesh atrocities against religious minorities, Yazidis, Christians, and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria as genocide under Article II of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; notes the UK Government's long standing policy that genocide determination is a matter of competent courts, including domestic criminal courts; and notes the German criminal court's verdict of 30th November 2021 finding a Daesh fighter guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity; and calls on the Government to formally recognise the Daesh atrocities against Yazidis, Christians and other religious minorities as genocide and take further steps to ensure justice, including by leading efforts to establish an international mechanism to prosecute the perpetrators.

Justice for the Yazidi and other religious minority victims of Daesh genocide

EDM 436 (session 2021-22)

15 September 2021

Brendan O'Hara

That this House recalls that on 20 April 2016 the House voted 278 to 0 in favour of declaring the crimes of Daesh as genocide; notes that the Government contributed to the successful establishment of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) to collect and preserve the evidence of Daesh's atrocities in Iraq and to support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold the perpetrators to account; further notes that UNITAD identified 1,444 suspected perpetrators responsible for the attacks against the Yazidis, including 14 members deemed most responsible for the atrocities classified as war crimes, crimes against humanity and even genocide; is concerned that only a few perpetrators have been brought to justice, whether in Iraq or abroad, and for terror-related offences only; and calls on the Government to lead the initiative at the UN Security Council to either refer the situation in Iraq to the International Criminal Court or to establish an ad-hoc International Tribunal for Daesh's atrocities in Iraq to ensure justice for the survivors and families of victims of the crimes of Daesh.

Islamic State/Daesh - genocide

EDM 444 (session 2016-17)

13 September 2016

Alan Meale

That this House recalls that on 20 April 2016 the House voted 278-0 in favour of declaring the actions of Islamic State/DAESH as genocide; notes that since that time that organisation has continued its appalling and systematic extermination of minority groups across Syria and Iraq; is dismayed that since that vote the Government has taken no action to bring this matter before the United Nations Security Council with the intentions of authorising the International Criminal Court to take an official determination on those crimes under the terms of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and calls on the Government to immediately set in motion this process so that lives can be saved and such practices stopped in the immediate future.

Genocide in Syria and Iraq

EDM 1008 (session 2015-16)

26 January 2016

Robert Flello

That this House is appalled by the beheadings, crucifixions, shootings, burnings, other murders, torture, rape and extensive violence being perpetrated by Daesh or IS against Christians and other minorities in Syria and Iraq on the basis of religion and ethnicity; observes that this disgusting behaviour clearly falls within the definition of genocide as determined by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide; notes the recent report from the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq, which concludes that Daesh is holding approximately 3,500 slaves, mostly women and children in Iraq, primarily from the Yazidi community, and describes Daesh's systematic and widespread violence as staggering, concluding that these acts amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide; and calls on the Government to use all its influence at the UN to create a stated consensus that genocide is indeed being perpetrated so that the provisions of the Convention can urgently, legitimately and effectively be invoked and implemented.

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