



Jiyun Foundation  
for Human Rights

## VOICES OF TRAUMA AND HOPE

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All names in this publication have been changed to protect survivors' identities.



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## DEAR READER,

sharing your life story is difficult. It takes strength for a survivor of violence to recount traumatic experiences to someone he or she does not know. You cannot tell just anyone; it has to be someone you trust. The testimonies in this publication are representative of the individuals who have confided their stories to the Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights.

With over ten years experience, the Jiyan Foundation leads in providing quality rehabilitation services to survivors of human rights abuses in Iraq. Our teams of local psychotherapists, counselors and doctors offer physical examinations, medical services, psychotherapy and trauma care. Since 2005, we have treated thousands of patients in various locations, including refugee camps, rural and remote areas, prisons and women's shelters.

We created this booklet to share our patients' stories with a larger community. Too many historical injustices go unacknowledged in Iraq, and human rights abuses continue

to this day. We feel it is essential to uncover these injustices and help our patients speak out, in the hope that one day all people will enjoy their fundamental human rights in Iraq.

We need your support to reach this goal. Non-governmental organizations like the Jiyan Foundation need help in order to assist survivors of violence and to lobby for institutional and legal change. This endeavor takes time and dedication. We hope to welcome you on our side in this difficult task.

**SALAH AHMAD**  
President



# HISTORIC TIMELINE IRAQ

- 1968 ○ Coup d'état bringing Ba'ath party to power
- 1979 ○ Saddam Hussein becomes president and installs terror regime
- 1980 – 1988 ○ Iran-Iraq war
- 1986 – 1988 ○ “Anfal Campaign”: genocidal acts committed against the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq
- March 1988 ○ Chemical attacks on Halabja, killing 5,000 Kurds
- 1990 ○ Iraq invades Kuwait, provoking first Gulf War
- 1991 ○ Southern Arab Shia and northern Kurdish populations rebel, but are brutally suppressed by the regime
- No-fly zone set up in northern Iraq
- 1994 – 1998 ○ Civil war between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, killing thousands

- 1996 ○ Iraqi forces launch offensive in northern no-fly zone and capture Erbil
- 2003 ○ US-led invasion topples Saddam Hussein's government
- 2004 ○ Abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US troops becomes public
- 2005 ○ Iraqi voters approve federal constitution and elect new parliament
- December 2006 ○ Saddam Hussein executed for crimes against humanity
- 2007 ○ Peak of sectarian violence, more than 100 civilian deaths per day
- 2008 ○ Kurdish Regional Parliament passes law against domestic violence
- Massive terrorist attacks carried out by Al Qaeda in Iraq

- 2010 ○ “Chemical Ali” Hassan al-Majid executed for crimes of genocide
- March 2011 ○ Start of Syrian civil war
- October 2011 ○ Complete withdrawal of US troops from Iraq
- 2013 ○ Sectarian war intensifies, more than 900 casualties per month
- June 2014 ○ ISIS conquers Anbar and Mosul, declares caliphate and starts military offensive, Kurdish Peshmerga become main force in fighting them
- August 2014 ○ ISIS attacks Sinjar, attempted genocide against Yazidi people, kidnapping and enslavement of 5,000 women and girls
- International Coalition starts launching airstrikes against ISIS
- September 2014 ○ Maliki steps down as Prime Minister and is replaced by al-Abadi

- since 2014 ○ Kurdistan Region hosts more than 1.5 million internally displaced people and 250,000 Syrian refugees
- since 2015 ○ Government forces together with Kurdish Peshmerga, allied militias, and international support start retaking ISIS-held territories, including Anbar, Ramadi, Falluja, and Mosul
- since 2016 ○ UN describes Iraq's humanitarian crisis as “one of the world's worst”, and international organizations report deteriorating human rights situation



# LEYLA

aged 65



4/5

In November 1987, the Iraqi army unlawfully arrested Leyla and her children. Together with over 100 other villagers, they were taken to a prison where thirteen of them were shot in front of their eyes. Soldiers brutally beat Leyla and later transferred her and her children to another prison in southern Iraq.

Leyla's detention was part of Saddam Hussein's "Anfal Campaign" during the 1980s: genocidal acts against the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq which caused the deaths of up to 180,000 Kurds.

During her detention, Leyla was tortured, deprived of food and water, and forced to witness sham executions. She lived in constant fear that she and her children would be killed.

Leyla was finally released after a year. On returning to their village, the family lived in a camp set up by the Iraqi army. Here too, they were effectively held prisoners. Leyla took on occasional work, but she and her children mainly depended on relatives and friends to survive.

Leyla was haunted by memories of her ordeal. When our mobile team first met her, she could not stop crying. She

Once a week, a small team of our doctors and psychologists visits remote villages to offer free consultations.

suffered concentration problems and severe flashbacks. Her symptoms were aggravated by the ongoing unrest and violence in Iraq.

In the course of regular therapy sessions, our psychological experts helped Leyla create a psychological safe space in her mind and to identify sources of support in her life.

Leyla is now calmer and better able to concentrate. She is learning techniques to manage her trauma and flashbacks. "My life was dark", she said to us, "but your help gave me light." Leyla's children are grown up and married now. They are keen to support Leyla, and give her renewed hope.

“My life was dark, but your help gave me light.”

Many survivors of the "Anfal Campaign" are widows who lost their husbands to summary executions or forced disappearance. These women struggled to feed their children, and had no time to consider their own needs or well-being. The campaign mainly targeted remote rural areas, and many survivors have always had poor access to education, health care or social services. The Jiyon Foundation reaches out to survivors: One morning a week, a small team of our psychologists and doctors visits remote villages to provide free consultations. Since 2005, our mobile teams have treated 3,500 people. More than 70 percent of our patients are women and girls.



DANA

aged 47



6/7

An essential factor in trauma therapy is that the treatment is dependable. It is crucial that a support center does not close down during a course of therapy.

Dana was arrested twice in his life for political activities. During both periods of detention, he suffered some of the worst forms of torture. He was beaten all over his body, exposed to electric shocks, singed, and hung up by his feet. He spent months in solitary confinement and his torturers repeatedly threatened to kill him and his family.

The first time he was arrested, Dana was imprisoned by members of the Ba'ath regime. He was only 12 years old and spent more than a year in prison. After his release, he resumed his political activities and later married and had children. In 1996, during the civil war between the two main Kurdish parties, Dana was arrested and tortured again.

When he first came to the Jiyen Foundation, Dana suffered terrible nightmares. He was plagued by thoughts of death, and often felt sad and angry. He struggled to control his emotions, especially with his sons. He also experienced physical pain in various parts of his body.

Using supportive therapy techniques, our experts encouraged Dana to express his feelings. We helped him analyze his emotions and understand their relation to his past expe-

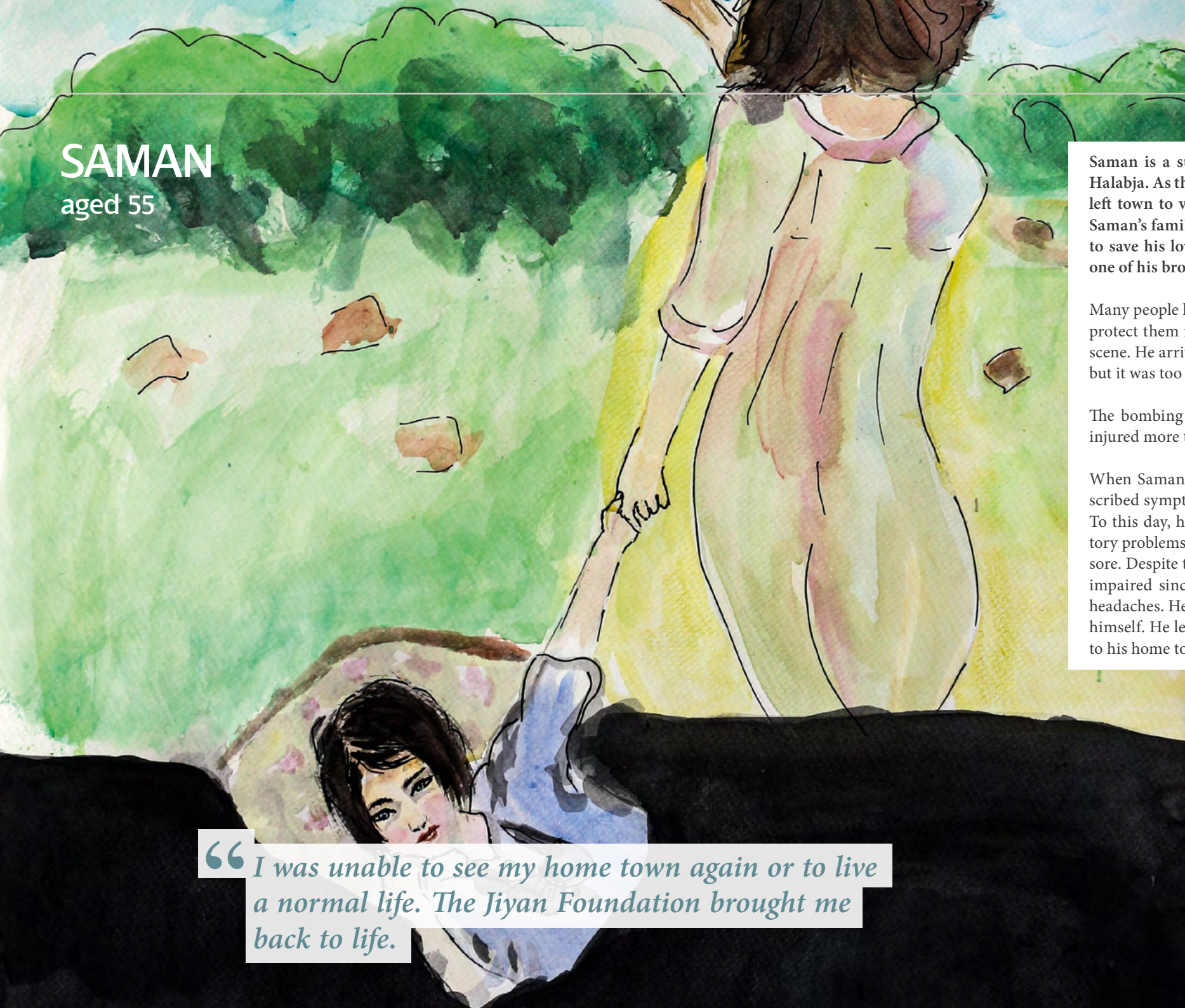
riences. This allowed him to distance himself from the emotions to some extent. We also worked on building Dana's sense of self-worth and supported him in developing new life goals.

Dana's therapy is showing very positive effects. He speaks with more confidence, and he can articulate his needs and ask for help. He has started a new job as a barber, working with his younger son. This has given him more income and allowed him to spend more time with his son.

In the future, we plan to involve Dana's sons in the therapeutic process as a way to support Dana's healing and improve their relationship.

*“When I got out of prison, I felt great. But in the past decades, I forgot about my inner motivation. The Jiyen Foundation brought back my sense of self-worth.”*

Thousands of torture survivors in Iraqi Kurdistan suffer from the physical and psychological consequences of their ordeal. Many are affected by chronic pain and infections, others feel tremendous sadness or wish to die. Panic attacks, feelings of shame and guilt, sleeplessness, nightmares or anger are also common among survivors. These difficulties impact severely on a person's ability to lead a healthy life and to access education and employment. Therapy can help torture survivors lead self-determined lives and become active members of society again. The Jiyen Foundation has been supporting survivors of torture in Iraqi Kurdistan since 2005.



**SAMAN**  
aged 55



8/9

Our experts have treated more than 2,000 survivors of chemical attacks for severe psychological and physical trauma.

Saman is a survivor of the 1988 chemical bombing in Halabja. As the gas attacks happened, he and his wife had left town to visit his father-in-law just outside Halabja. Saman's family was less fortunate. When he rushed back to save his loved ones, he found his mother, father and one of his brothers dying.

Many people had sought refuge in cellars, but this did not protect them from the gas. Saman vividly remembers the scene. He arrived to find his loved ones writhing in agony, but it was too late to save them.

The bombing killed over 5,000 people and permanently injured more than 10,000.

When Saman first came to the Jiyan Foundation, he described symptoms typical for victims of chemical attacks. To this day, he suffers skin irritation, rashes and respiratory problems. He coughs up blood and his throat is often sore. Despite three eye operations, Saman's sight has been impaired since the attack. He also suffers from chronic headaches. He has difficulties sleeping and tends to isolate himself. He left Halabja in 1990 and was unable to return to his home town for many years.

During therapy at our center, Saman was able to identify sources of support in his life and to make positive life changes. He learned meditation and relaxation techniques which he now uses daily. His sleep routine and overall health have improved. Saman has learned to take responsibility for his relationships and to re-establish contact with his family.

Returning to Halabja has been a major change in Saman's life. His relationship with his family has normalized, which is an important step towards stabilizing his life as a whole.

*“I was unable to see my home town again or to live a normal life. The Jiyan Foundation brought me back to life.”*

Survivors of chemical attacks suffer chronic health problems which require lifelong treatment and care. The Jiyan Foundation is the only facility in Iraqi Kurdistan specializing in medical and psychological care for survivors of chemical attacks. Saman is one of 2,000 survivors who our experts have treated for severe psychological and physical trauma. Both the Iraqi Supreme Court and the Iraqi Parliament have designated the chemical attacks in Halabja as crime against humanity and genocide. The survivors are entitled to financial and moral compensation, but so far they have received neither money nor a formal apology from the Iraqi government.

# AMIRA

aged 20



10/11

The Jiyān Foundation takes an interdisciplinary approach, offering medical and psychological care by doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and trauma specialists.

practices sports and is learning new skills like sewing and jewelry making.

Therapy is also helping Amira turn her negative thoughts into positive ones. She is less afraid, she sleeps better, and she has greater trust and confidence in herself.

Amira has recently married and is expecting her first child. Having her own family gives her hope. One of her dreams is to see her family's farm again. Her therapy is ongoing. "It helps me a lot and makes my life happy", she says.

Amira survived an attack on her home town when ISIS took control of Salah ad Din province in 2014. ISIS fighters beheaded 24 men and boys from Amira's family in less than one hour, accusing them of being rebels.

One of Amira's most vivid memories is coming home to the family farm to find many of her relatives dead. "Their bodies were so mutilated that we had to guess which limbs belonged to whom in order to bury them", she says. "I can't forget that scene."

Amira and her remaining relatives managed to escape, but in doing so, they had to leave everything behind. The family now lives in a camp for displaced people.

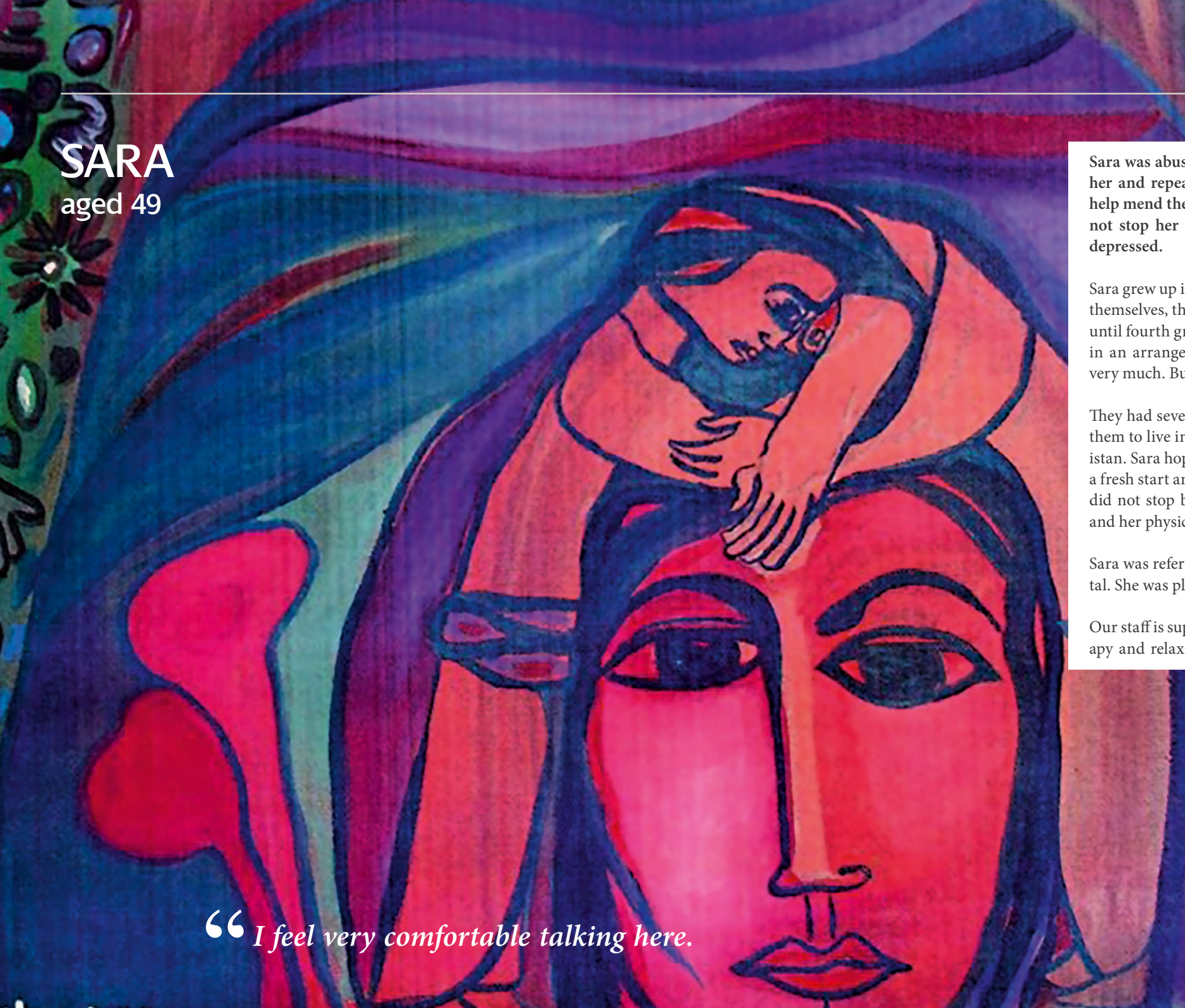
Prior to these horrific events, Amira suffered terrible trauma as an adolescent after witnessing her aunt's death in a fire. She suffered nightmares and fits of crying and anger, and occasionally passed out.

Our experts have helped Amira work through some of her haunting memories, fears and recurring flashbacks. With the help of our staff, Amira learned to find the strong parts of her personality to use them for her own benefit. She now

As a result of ISIS attacks, over three million Iraqis have been forced to leave their homes. Half of them have found refuge in the Kurdish provinces. Many suffer from physical and mental trauma and are haunted by the memories of what they were forced to witness. The Jiyān Foundation takes a unique interdisciplinary approach by offering medical and psychological care by doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and trauma specialists in Iraqi Kurdistan.

*"I can't forget that scene."*





**SARA**  
aged 49



12/13

For many of our clients, their therapy is the first time they have talked to someone about their experiences.

Sara was abused by her husband for many years: He beat her and repeatedly raped her. She hoped a move might help mend their relationship, but when she realized it did not stop her husband beating her, she became severely depressed.

Sara grew up in a Kurdish family in Tehran. Being illiterate themselves, the parents let her and her siblings go to school until fourth grade. At the age of fifteen, she was given away in an arranged marriage to a young man who loved her very much. But after a few years, he started beating her.

They had several children and it became too expensive for them to live in Tehran, so the family moved to Iraqi Kurdistan. Sara hoped that the move would allow them to make a fresh start and mend their relationship – but her husband did not stop beating her. Sara became severely depressed and her physical health deteriorated.

Sara was referred to the Jiyān Foundation by a local hospital. She was plagued by suicidal thoughts at the time.

Our staff is supporting Sara with cognitive behavioral therapy and relaxation therapy, with the aim of building her

self-esteem. Sara enjoys the privacy of our center and the support she finds there. “I feel very comfortable talking here”, she says.

One goal is to include Sara’s husband in the treatment in partner therapy sessions and to support Sara in telling her husband that he must stop beating her. Sara is benefitting from a good relationship to her mother and sister, who are supportive of her. Her children, who are now grown, also support her. They give Sara strength and hope.

“I feel very comfortable talking here.”

More than two thirds of our clients are women and girls. A large majority of them experience domestic violence. Survivors of domestic violence need safe spaces like those offered by the Jiyān Foundation. For many of our clients, their therapy is the first time they have talked to someone about their experiences. The Jiyān Foundation urges the Kurdistan Regional Government to improve women’s access to legal protection and rehabilitation, as set out in the Domestic Violence Law of 2011. We also call for the implementation of international legal standards for the protection of women from violence, including the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.



# ARI

aged 11



Ari was just six years old when his mother died in a terrorist suicide bombing in Baghdad. Ari heard the explosion at a nearby market. Knowing his mother had gone there, he called his father for help.

Ari's father looked everywhere for his wife at the market, but could not find her. She had been taken to a hospital, but did not survive.

Ari could not understand why his mother was suddenly gone. She had kissed him goodbye just a few hours earlier. "She was not sick", he says. Ari was extremely sad and became an anxious and nervous child.

As the security situation in Baghdad deteriorated, the family decided to leave the city and relocate to Kirkuk. This move overwhelmed Ari. While he was still grieving for his mother, he had to give up his familiar home and close friends.

Our experts helped Ari express his sadness through play therapy. He loved playing with the toy house in our children's room or bringing small figures to life on our sand-play table.

Children display different symptoms from adults, and their treatment must be adapted to their needs. The Jiyan Foundation is the only organization in Iraqi Kurdistan that provides psychotherapy tailored to children and young people.

Ari also liked drawing. He drew scenes from his family life, his old house in Baghdad and the new home in Kirkuk. Initially, Ari only used white and grey, but over time, as he started to heal, he introduced more colors.

After four months of therapy, Ari's condition improved significantly. He still comes to our center twice a month, and our experts continue to monitor his progress. He is attending school again and has found new friends.

“My mom was not sick.”

There is little awareness of children's psychological needs in Iraq, and their symptoms are often left untreated. What is more, many parents have suffered psychological trauma themselves. Children display different symptoms from adults, and their treatment must be adapted to their specific needs. Often, this involves helping them express their feelings without words, through play or drawing. The Jiyan Foundation is the only organization in Iraqi Kurdistan that provides psychotherapy tailored to children and young people. More than a third of our patients are children. We also provide family therapy and training for parents and teachers to help them recognize and cater to children's needs.

# ZARO

aged 5



“My son needs special care, but there are no places to go.”

Zaro was born prematurely, which severely affected his health and development. He suffers from tics: repetitive, convulsive movements he cannot control. Despite his age, he can speak only a few words. Zaro's father has a long history of mental illness and his mother is struggling to cope.

In 1996, Zaro's father witnessed the killing of his own father in a conflict between the two main Kurdish parties. His mental health has been unstable ever since, and he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He is aggressive and violent, also towards Zaro.

Zaro's mother tried leaving her husband and sought shelter with her brother and sister, but they found Zaro to be too much work and sent them away. Zaro's mother had no choice but to go back to her husband. She never went to school and has no income of her own. The family lives in Chamchamal, a city with a high poverty rate and few jobs or social services.

Our interdisciplinary team at the Jiyen Foundation supports Zaro's family in caring for his special needs. We are advising his mother on his condition, and two of his siblings have been invited to join the family therapy.

## Children with disabilities require specialized care. Our teams support families in providing for their children's special needs.

Play therapy is giving Zaro a chance to enjoy life like any healthy child. Playing also has an important role in improving his motor and coordination skills. Art therapy is helping Zaro express his thoughts and feelings, which is particularly important due to his late speech development. In addition, our experts are using storytelling techniques with Zaro. Children naturally tend to imitate characters in stories, so this technique contributes to reducing his aggressive behavior and improving his relationships.

Zaro is one of many children with special needs in Iraq who suffer neglect. His family lacks the means and knowledge to properly care for him. Zaro's mother is keen for her son to get better, but she has little support and finds it hard to follow our instructions. As a result, Zaro's progress is slow. We will continue to support the family as best we can.

Despite being a city with 100,000 residents, Chamchamal has no facilities for children with special needs. The Jiyen Foundation is the only organization offering services for children and young people in the region. Children need the state to protect them when their families can't cope. In Iraq, there is no social security network in place. Families struggling to provide for their children receive no support, leaving children at risk of neglect and abuse.

**BASMA**  
aged 20



Basma and her family are Yazidis. In 2014, their village was surrounded by ISIS fighters who forcibly took most of the women and children to Mosul. There, they separated the group. Basma and the other young women were taken to Syria, where the armed men sold each girl for up to 15,000 US dollars.

Basma, her sister and four other young women were sold to a man who forced them to cook and clean his house. Together with other men he knew, he repeatedly raped them. They were also subjected to other forms of violence, including being beaten on the head with a belt.

Basma and her sister managed to get access to a mobile phone and to call their brother. They gave him their address and, for a fee of 6,000 US dollars, he was able to arrange their release through a middleman. Basma and her sister returned to live in Iraqi Kurdistan, where they sought help from the Jiyana Foundation.

When we first met Basma, she suffered loss of appetite, poor sleep, crying fits, tremors and fainting spells. She spoke with a low voice and said she felt very sad and weak.

In 2015, the Jiyana Foundation opened its first in-patient clinic for women and girls. It is staffed by women only and provides round-the-clock therapeutic support.

After several sessions of psychotherapy, Basma started to feel more at ease. Having a safe space to talk and express her emotions helped her work through her experiences. She learned techniques to release tension and her sleep improved.

We invited Basma and her relatives to attend family therapy. This will help her relatives understand that Basma's condition is a result of the violence and abuse she experienced. She needs every support, and she can't be blamed or shamed for what happened.

*“My head hurts from the memories and the beatings.”*

In summer 2014, ISIS men abducted around 5,000 Yazidi women and girls and hundreds of children. The women and girls were sold as slaves. Young boys were used as child soldiers. Around 2,000 abductees were able to escape or were sold back to their families through middlemen. Many remain enslaved today. In September 2015, the Jiyana Foundation opened its first in-patient clinic. The clinic, which is unique in Iraq, is staffed by women only and provides round-the-clock therapeutic support to severely traumatized women and girls. Social security and protective measures are needed to support survivors of ISIS violence and assist their reintegration into society.



# SUAD

aged 12



20/21

Our teams visit schools to teach children about their rights and how to claim them. We also offer training for teachers and parents.

for children. “I want to play”, she would say, “please take me to the playroom”.

Suad attended our center every week, where doctors treated her physical symptoms. She also took part in group therapy with other survivors of forced marriage. Over time, she began to find her own voice and talk about her problems and needs. Today, Suad’s mental health has stabilized. She has gained self-confidence, which enabled her to open up and accept help.

Suad now lives in accommodation provided by a women’s rights organization. She has a warm relationship with a case worker who gives her advice and emotional support. “She’s like a mother to me”, says Suad.

Suad was forced to marry when she was just nine years old. Born in Baghdad to a poor family, her father suffered from alcohol addiction and her mother left the family when Suad was only three.

Suad’s father worked at a government cleaning company. He became ill when Suad was seven years old. Knowing he would soon die, her father brought his children to live with a friend. When Suad turned nine, the new family forced her to marry.

When a distant relative found out about Suad’s situation, he came to live with her – though not to help her and give her a chance at the childhood she deserved. Instead, he exploited her and forced her to work as his domestic servant.

Suad was referred to us by a women’s and girls’ rights organization. Our experts found Suad showed clear signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. She was extremely irritable, had trouble concentrating and experienced fainting spells. She also suffered from abdominal pains and headaches.

At first, Suad did not want to talk about herself or her life. She liked playing, and enjoyed spending time in our room

Although forbidden by law, the forced marriage of minors remains a common practice in many rural areas of Iraqi Kurdistan. The minimum age for marriage stipulated by law is 15. The Jiyan Foundation runs training sessions in schools to teach children about their rights and how to claim them. We also offer training for teachers and parents. Many uneducated families are unaware of the medical and psychological risks associated with marrying their children too early. We call on the government to protect children. This requires effective law enforcement as well as access to crisis intervention services for children at risk.

“I want to play. Please take me to the playroom.”



**SAMIR**  
aged 9



22/23

The Jiyān Foundation is the only organization in Iraqi Kurdistan working with qualified trauma specialists to support Syrian refugees.

Samir and his family experienced heavy fighting in their hometown Aleppo in Syria. After being held captive by ISIS fighters, they fled the war and are now living as refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan. Samir's father has no work and the family is very poor.

When ISIS fighters imprisoned Samir and his family in the war, he was locked in a large room with many other prisoners for several days. He witnessed the terrorists slapping his mother and putting a gun to her head, calling her an infidel and threatening to kill her.

Ever since, Samir has been sad and withdrawn. He is a sensitive boy who easily picks up on his mother's moods and cries when she is sad. He does not get along with his father, who does not treat his mother well. Samir gets angry when his father is unkind to his mother.

Although Samir attends a special school for Syrian refugees, he avoids contact with other children. He spends most of his time at home and has bad dreams and a poor appetite.

Samir and his mother receive psychological support at the Jiyān Foundation. We help Samir's mother understand her

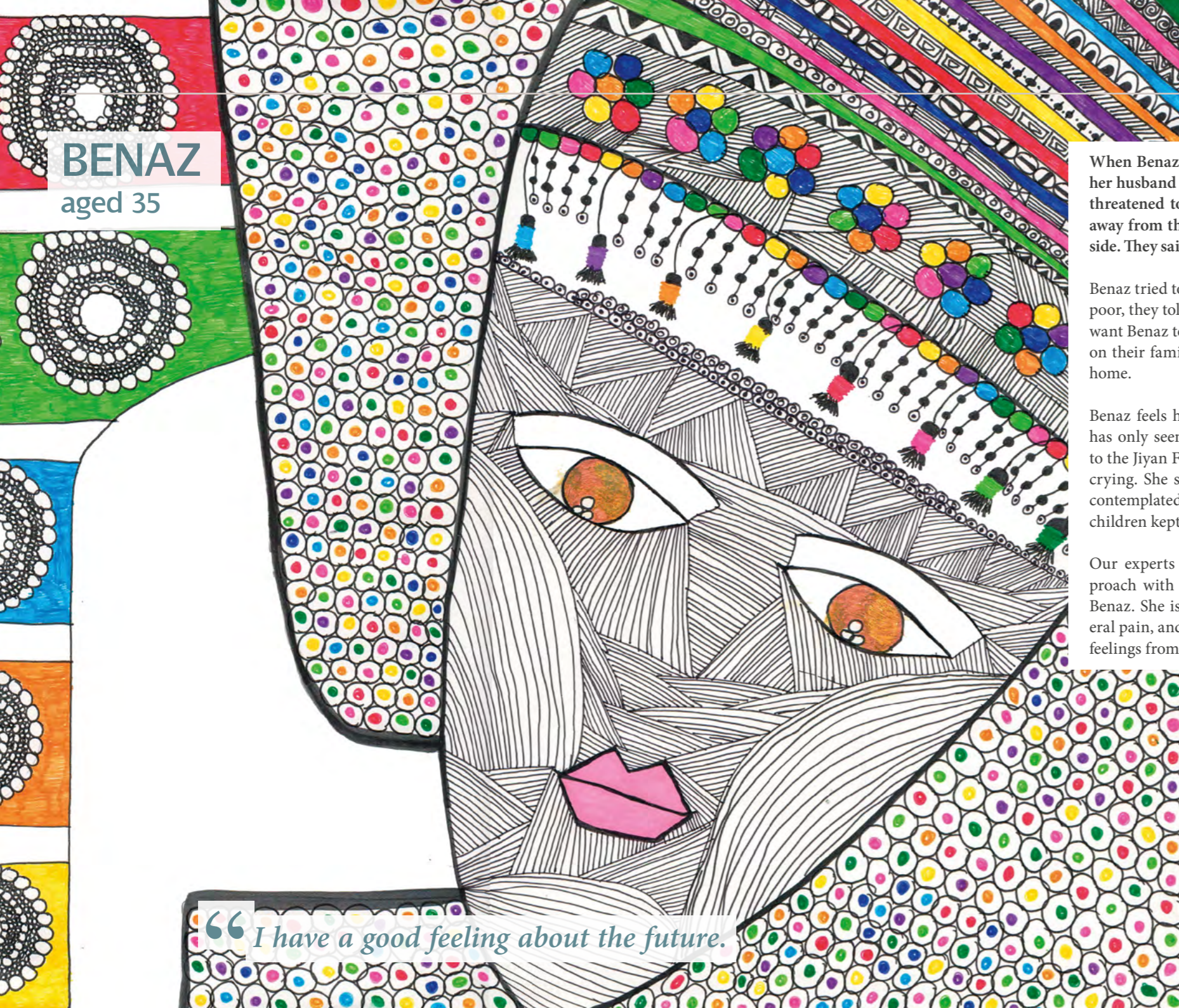
son's needs and support him. Using child-friendly methods, our specialists encourage Samir to play and draw at our center. As a result, he is gradually gaining interest in playing with others, and is learning to control his anger. His appetite is starting to return.

We will continue to build Samir's self-confidence and give him opportunities to express his feelings through art therapy. In addition, our experts will support Samir using eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). This is a special form of psychotherapy which is very effective in helping patients process distressing memories.

Around 250,000 refugees from Syria have sought safety in Iraqi Kurdistan. Because the Kurdistan Regional Government is also hosting three million Iraqis who fled ISIS violence, it is overwhelmed by the large number of people and their humanitarian needs. Many Syrians have been living in camps or makeshift settlements for years. The Jiyān Foundation calls upon the international community to support local infrastructure and long-term programs for refugees in the region. Professional psychological care and trauma treatment remain among the most neglected priorities. The Jiyān Foundation is currently the only organization working with qualified trauma specialists to support refugees from Syria.



**“** I liked that I could play and meet other children at the Jiyān Foundation. I feel safe here. **”**



**BENAZ**  
aged 35



*“I have a good feeling about the future.”*

When Benaz refused to agree to a polygamous marriage, her husband became increasingly violent towards her. He threatened to banish her from their home and keep her away from their children. The men in his family took his side. They said they would kill Benaz if she did not comply.

Benaz tried to seek shelter with her parents, but being very poor, they told her they could not support her. They do not want Benaz to get divorced, as they feel it will bring shame on their family. They want her to return to her husband's home.

Benaz feels hopeless. She misses her children, whom she has only seen once in four months. When she first came to the Jiyan Foundation, she was so sad, she could not stop crying. She suffered from insomnia and nightmares. She contemplated suicide several times, but the thought of her children kept her alive.

Our experts started an interdisciplinary therapeutic approach with psychotherapy and medical care to support Benaz. She is receiving treatment for headaches and general pain, and therapy helps prevent negative thoughts and feelings from overwhelming her.

In addition to providing psychological support, our experts refer survivors of abusive marriages to partner organizations for legal advice.

Benaz is making small steps towards taking back control of her life. She feels less pain and can control her crying more. We have invited her to start group therapy, and expect she will benefit from speaking to other women with similar experiences. This will help raise her self-confidence and reduce her stress.

We referred Benaz to one of our partner organizations to get legal advice, and she has now found protection and shelter there. A lawyer has started legal proceedings to uphold her right to see her children. “I have a good feeling about the future”, she says.

Although polygamy is illegal in Iraqi Kurdistan, it is still a common practice in many regions. Women find it very hard to leave abusive and unhappy marriages because they tend to be financially dependent on their husbands. Traditionally, the children stay with the husband and women are at risk of being shamed and excluded from society if they leave their spouses. In addition to psychological support, survivors of abusive marriages urgently need protection and legal advice. They need access to income support, vocational training and jobs in order to be able to rebuild their lives.



# STAFF TESTIMONIALS

In order to render the Jiyan Foundation’s services truly holistic, our health teams include medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, counselors and trauma specialists as well as physiotherapists and nurses.



When asked about the needs of survivors of violence, they call their government to account and demand commitment on several levels.

“Rehabilitation requires multiple interventions – psychological, physical, and social – and survivors of violence in Iraq are in desperate need of help in all these areas. There are far too few rehabilitation centers to cater for the number of patients.”

“Survivors of violence need a full rehabilitation system supported by the government, and many more highly trained care providers are required.”

“I believe many of my patients and others would benefit from specialized services, such as rape help lines and domestic abuse help centers giving free legal advice and support.”



In Iraqi Kurdistan, seeking help from a psychologist or therapist is still seen as a weakness and is highly stigmatized due to cultural and religious beliefs. Adding to that, many survivors lack the financial means to afford professional treatment or to obtain justice.

“My patients often feel isolated because psychological problems are seen negatively. Communities need education on psychological problems in order to end this stigma.”

“No one wants to be called crazy or mad, so people hide their psychological pain and do not seek treatment.”

“Psychotherapy is a relatively new approach in Iraq and Kurdistan. There is still a long way to go until psychological problems are discussed as seriously and as openly as physical problems.”

“Other barriers to rehabilitation and justice services are accessibility and cost. Many survivors cannot afford treatment or lack the funds needed to go to court to seek retribution.”



Jiyan Foundation staff face daily challenges when working with survivors of human rights abuses in an unstable security context.

“My patients often find it hard to understand and accept that their condition is a normal reaction to an abnormal event, and that abuse and violence can have a severe effect on the human psyche.”

“Some of my patients do not believe we can help them at all. Earning their trust is the most difficult challenge.”

“I am proud that everyone is determined to work despite the dangers. For example, six car bombs exploded one day, and the roads were blocked to work. Every staff member got to work that day. Many of us walked.”



Yet, despite these challenges, staff members find strength and motivation in their rewarding work, continued skills training, and supportive colleagues.

“I believe it is my responsibility to help others, and the Jiyan Foundation is giving me the opportunity to do so.”

“I am glad to be able to attend many courses and seminars to develop my knowledge and skills in order to give our clients the best service possible.”

“The two most important rewards are my relationships with my colleagues, and the recovery of my clients.”

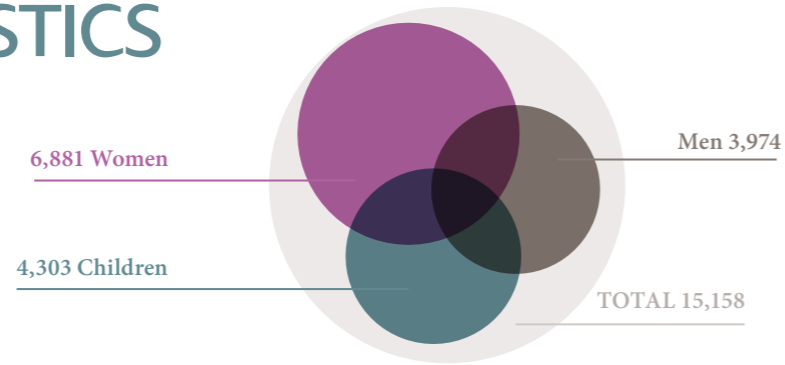
“I have been working for the Jiyan Foundation for over six years, and the moments when my clients say ‘thank you’ mean everything to me.”



# SURVIVORS STATISTICS

CLIENT STATISTICS 2005 – 2016  
Rehabilitation Program

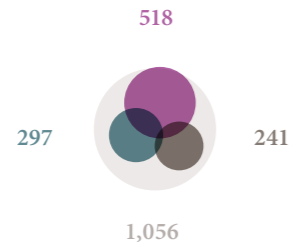
Local Population



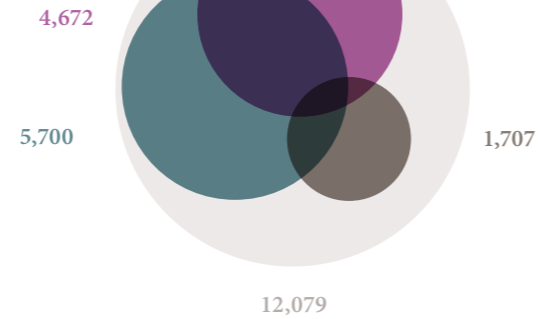
CLIENT STATISTICS 2014 – 2016

Syrian Refugees

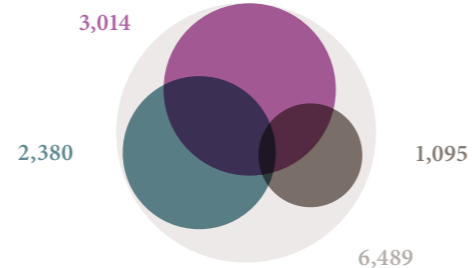
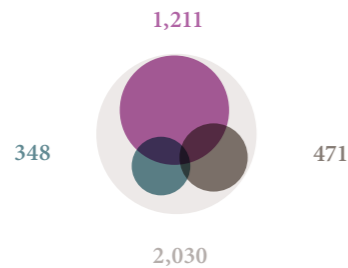
Rehabilitation Program



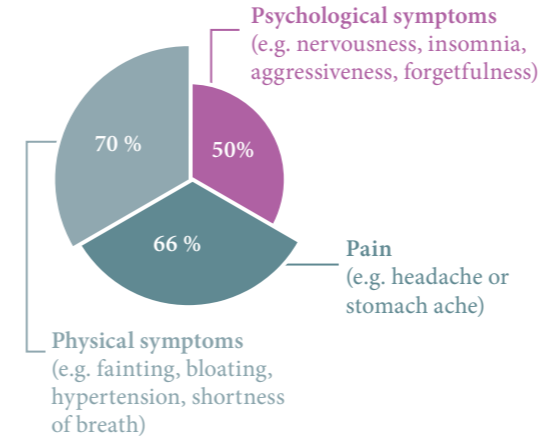
Medical Assistance Program



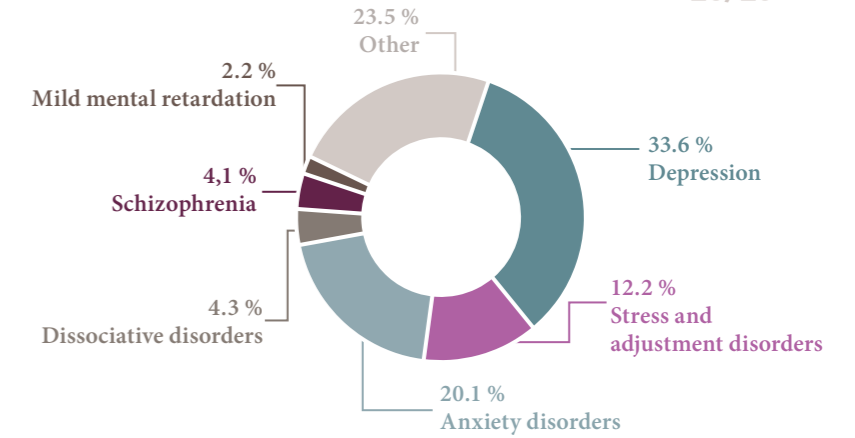
Internally Displaced Persons



Most Common Symptoms



Psychological Diagnoses



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Forms of Therapy for Survivors:

**Psychotherapy:** trauma therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy, play therapy, sandplay therapy, music therapy, art therapy, group therapy, family therapy  
**Other Therapies:** medical treatment, physiotherapy, relaxation exercises, yoga

Educational Background

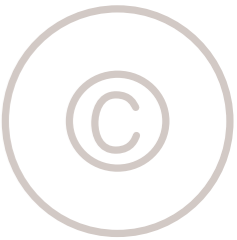
Illiteracy rate  
43.5 %



Attended only  
Primary school  
63.7 %

Baccalaureate &  
College/University  
10.1 %

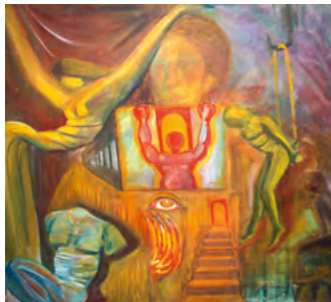




# PICTURE CREDITS



▷ These paintings are a collaborative work between a child living in a refugee camp and art students. It is part of the Coloring Your Dreams series, a co-operative project between the College of Fine Arts in Sulaymaniyah and the Jiyan Foundation.



▷ This painting was done by a survivor of torture who received treatment at the Jiyan Foundation in Kirkuk. He said in the painting he wanted to show the dark moments in the life of a prisoner in the torture chambers of Saddam Hussein.



▷ These pictures were painted by Khoshi Shawqi, a Kurdish painter from an artistic family in Sulaymaniyah. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 1988 and taught at the College of Fine Arts in Sulaymaniyah before emigrating to Germany. Her artwork focuses on Kurdish history and heritage as well as the vulnerabilities and strengths of women.



▷ This picture was painted by a patient from Halabja. She is the only survivor of a family killed during the chemical attacks in 1988. The painting shows how treatment at the Jiyan Foundation helped her escape darkness and find hope.



▷ This drawing is by a girl from Kirkuk who witnessed her friends die in a bomb explosion on their way to school. In therapy, she said she misses feeling safe and happy the way she did before the attack.



▷ This painting is an artwork by Rebwaz Saeed, a Kurdish artist based in Sulaymaniyah. He holds an MA and a PhD degree from the Middlesex University, London, and heads the College of Fine Arts at the University of Sulaymaniyah. His work focuses on the issues of women's rights and violence against women.



▷ This drawing was done by Mina Sabah Rashid, a young artist from Sulaymaniyah. She said she wanted to show how women can make life colorful even though society does not provide them with many colors.



▷ These pictures were drawn by students from Mohammed Qudsi Primary School in Sulaymaniyah. They drew them during an International Children's Day event organized by the Jiyan Foundation.



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## HOW TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

The Jiyani Foundation helps women, children, and men from all walks of life returning to a self-determined, healthy future. We welcome you to support us. Below you will find ways to make a financial contribution.

### Donation Account in Germany

Jiyani Foundation for Human Rights  
Ethikbank  
BIC/SWIFT: GENODEF1ETK  
IBAN: DE48830944950003319644

### Donation Account in Kurdistan-Iraq

Jiyani Foundation for Human Rights / Sulaymaniyah  
Kurdistan International Bank for Investment and  
Development  
BIC/SWIFT: KIBIIQBA  
IBAN: IQ30097825163006820001

Donations are tax-deductible within the SEPA-area. Please  
leave your postal address in the transfer reference or send  
us an e-mail.

### Paypal

Donations can also be made through Paypal at  
[donate@jiyan-foundation.org](mailto:donate@jiyan-foundation.org).

### Betterplace

You may also support one of our projects  
at [betterplace.org](http://betterplace.org): [www.betterplace.org/en/  
organisations/9002-jiyan-foundation-for-human-rights](http://www.betterplace.org/en/organisations/9002-jiyan-foundation-for-human-rights)

Betterplace is a German-based donation platform and  
forwards 100% of the donation to the cause.



## IMPRINT

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