

CHILD ACCOUNT: "MY SOUL HURTS" - YAZIDI CHILD 10 YEARS AFTER GENOCIDE



15-year-old Viyan was just five when her family escaped the Yazidi genocide and fled their home in Sinjar. She has since been living in a tent in an IDP camp with her mother, father and siblings.
[Emily Garthwaite/ Save the Children]*

I want to go back to Sinjar, but I can't. It's not safe there anymore. I feel happy when I go there, but there's insecurity. The tragedy, this massacre that happened to the Yazidi people, it's not forgotten. The bones have not been collected. When I go there and see the bones lying on the ground, my body trembles.

The world should allow Yazidi children to migrate to other countries and live there. As long as we are safe - because neither the camp nor Sinjar is safe.



Viyana lives inside a tent in an IDP camp in Iraq with her family [Emily Garthwaite/ Save the Children]*

Every day, I try to stay inside my tent because it's the only place I feel comfortable. The streets outside are dirty and polluted, and no one cleans them. I only come out to go to school or attend my English class. When I leave my tent, my soul hurts.

Outside, I see children fighting and cursing at each other, and it makes me sad. I wish we lived somewhere better than here. Sometimes I wonder, why do parents bring children into this world?

If we are going to stay in the camps, they should build houses for us and improve these conditions. Children have no place to play; they play in the streets, which are full of stray animals. Children get diseases from the dirt. There is no family here without at least three sick children. I'm sick, and my brother is sick.

Now most people, even teenagers and little girls, even though they are around 10 years old, they always say that they wish they were dead and didn't have to live like this.

It is very difficult to live in tents in the heat. In the winter, with heavy rain, the tent gets watery. Children are dying here. The children here are always sick. That's why I want to

Commented [BH1]: around 10 years old

be a doctor when I grow up. I used to want to become an engineer, but I decided to become a doctor so I can help people. So that I can heal children and patients.

I think about what I can do for children. How to save them from this situation. I am now in a school where the teacher is very concerned about the students. The level of education here is very low. First, second and third grade students cannot read and write.



[Emily Garthwaite/ Save the Children]

This is the dress of the Yazidis - when we wear it, we show we are Yazidis. It is a holy dress. We, who fled from insecurity in Sinjar are not under international support. They should at least make the lives of the camp children better. If people return to Sinjar, at least make Sinjar safe for them.

Based on an interview with Viyan collected by Soraya Ali.*