



## **Oral Statement by the International Bar Association**

55th Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, Switzerland

ID with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

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### **Missing Yazidi Women and Girls and the Need for Justice and Accountability for the Community**

The IBA's Human Rights Institute (the IBAHRI) welcomes this opportunity to engage in an interactive dialogue on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR).

In August 2024, we will mark 10 years since Daesh attacked Sinjar and unleashed genocide against the Yazidis. This genocide was recognised by the Commission of Inquiry on SAR in its 2016 report entitled 'They Came to Destroy.' To this day, over 2,700 Yazidi women and children are still missing and their fate is unknown. Reports suggest that many of the Yazidi women are in Syria and continue to be enslaved. While there have been some singular efforts to get them back, there has been no international effort to ensure that all those missing are found and reunited with their families.

Furthermore, close to 10 years since the attack against the Yazidis, very little has been done to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice, and for States to be held accountable for their failures to prevent the Yazidi genocide.

As it is clear from the findings of the Yazidi Justice Committee, there is substantial evidence, allowing reasonable grounds to believe, that the SAR failed to discharge its obligation to prevent the genocide of the Yazidis on Syrian territory. This has led to the substantial commission of prohibited acts on Syrian and Iraqi soil by Daesh from, at least April 2013, and, in particular, August 2014. As such, the SAR bears responsibility for failing to take any steps reasonably available to it to prevent the commission of genocide by Daesh.

The IBAHRI calls upon the Commission of Inquiry and States to:

- Identify international best practices to inform the rescue efforts to ensure that the over 2,700 Yazidi women and children are reunited with their families as soon as possible.

- Take all measures reasonably available, including the use of available offices and legal means, to protect the Yazidis from ongoing and future acts of genocide and prevent further violations of international law.
- Institute steps preparatory to proceedings, and proceedings themselves, against the SAR before the International Court of Justice in relation to its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

Thank you.

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