

An Urgent Call to the Iraqi Government of Baghdad and the Kurdish Government of Erbil¹

By Prince Tahsin Sa'eed Ali

October 4, 2014

In this proclamation, Prince Tahsin Sa'eed Ali, the spiritual and political leader of the Yazidi people, implores the Iraqi and Kurdish governments to intervene on behalf of his community against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group. He urges Iraqi and Kurdish forces to support Yazidi militias in northern Iraq, liberate Yazidi areas from IS control, and free members of the Yazidi community who were abducted by IS in August 2014.

Since the 3rd of August, our Yazidi people have been exposed to the fiercest campaign of genocide [that they've experienced] in this century, which has taken the lives of more than 5,000 innocent people through the violence of the Da'esh [Islamic State] terrorist organization. More than 7,000 have been kidnapped — mostly women & children — and around 350,000 are now displaced and expelled into the Kurdistan Region, Syria, Turkey, and other countries, and living in very poor conditions, without access to the minimum requirements for basic human needs.

Despite the passing of more than two months of the Yazidi tragedy, and the IS occupation of Sinjar² and other Yazidi areas such as Ba'shiqa and Bahzany,³ and the presence of a Yazidi resistance defending with a patriotic spirit the very existence of the Yazidis — which is simultaneously a defense of the existence of Iraq, of an integral part of Iraq, and its people, honor, and dignity — until now we haven't seen any serious attempt to support this resistance in order to free Sinjar and other Yazidi areas, and to save those that can be saved from among the kidnapped and expelled Yazidis who are headed for an unknown destination, without the slightest concern of the central [Iraqi] and regional [Kurdistan] governments, as though the Yazidis were part of neither Iraq nor Kurdistan.

In the face of this horrific and catastrophic situation, we are filled with surprise at the Iraqi and [Kurdistan] Regional Governments' ignoring of our Yazidi tragedy as though this tragedy is not an Iraqi one.

A few days ago, the Kurdish Peshmerga forces⁴ announced the beginning of a battle to liberate Sinjar via Rabia⁵ in coordination with Iraqi forces and with the support of coalition airstrikes led by the U.S., but these forces have not achieved as great an advance as had been expected. This

¹ Translation and text excerpted from Matthew Barber, "The Yazidis Are Not Getting Support," *Syria Comment*, October 5, 2014, <https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/yazidis-getting-support/>.

² "Sinjar" refers to the Sinjar District of northern Iraq, which, along with the nearby Sheikhan District, constitutes the historical homeland of the Yazidi people. "Sinjar" also refers to the town of Sinjar, which serves as the district's capital and was largely destroyed during the 2014 genocide.

³ Ba'shiqa and Bahzany are twin towns located between the Mosul and Sheikhan Districts in northern Iraq. They are home to members of the *qewel* caste. *Qewels* are sacred musicians and singers who preserve Yazidi hymns, songs, and histories, passing them down from father to son.

⁴ The Peshmerga serve as the armed forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which governs the autonomous Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq.

⁵ Rabia is a town located in northwestern Iraq that is next to the Syrian border.

has prompted the IS forces to start fierce attacks on more than one front in Sinjar to tighten the noose on the Sinjar Protection Forces [local Yazidi volunteer defenders] by closing in on them from all sides.

We call on officials of the central and regional governments to bear responsibility — national, political, humanitarian, and moral — for the deterioration of the Sinjar situation and the consequences of it. We urge them to carry out their national duties to our besieged people in the Sinjar mountains, ask them to support the Sinjar Protection Forces logistically and militarily, and to facilitate the prompt delivery of weapons, equipment, and supplies — immediately.

- **Prince Tahsin Sa'eed Ali, Head of the Yazidi High Spiritual Council of Iraq and the World**