



Free Yezidi Foundation Statement

Death of ISIS leader al-Qurayshi aka Haji Abdullah

3 February 2022

Today it was announced that ISIS leader Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, also known as Haji Abdullah, the mastermind behind the 2014 Yezidi Genocide, has been killed during a U.S. special forces pre-dawn operation in northern Syria. U.S. president Joe Biden said that al-Qurayshi was responsible for the recent attack on a prison in Syria holding ISIS fighters and called him the "driving force" behind the genocide of the Yezidis in northern Iraq.¹

Although FYF would have preferred al-Qurayshi captured alive to answer for his unspeakable crimes in court, it is difficult to capture suspects during such operations. According to a senior US administration official, "al-Qurayshi detonated a significant blast, killing himself and several others, including his wife and children. This is the same terrorist tactic of his predecessor, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, taking his own life and his own family rather than face justice or stand and fight on his own."² An ISIS lieutenant and his wife were also killed during the pre-dawn raid.

FYF is grateful to all soldiers and intelligence officers who have pursued ISIS terrorists over the past years, and particularly grateful for American leadership in this regard. We would like to thank all U.S. military and intelligence personnel who were involved in researching, coordinating, and carrying out this successful operation.

Al-Qurayshi was one of the ideological proponents and logistical leaders responsible for the Yezidi Genocide. ISIS justified the genocide of Yezidis in its magazine,³ and Al-Qurayshi and others were zealously committed to and insistent upon inflicting cruelty and horror on Yezidis. This included the mass executions of Yezidi men and older women and the abductions and enslavement of Yezidi women and children – forced to endure brutality beyond description.⁴ FYF continues to compose structural analyses and case files on ISIS perpetrators responsible for the Yezidi Genocide, including the recent report on [The Hardan Atrocities](#).⁵

Removing Al-Qurayshi from the battlefield is a notable success in the fight against ISIS. The situation in Syria and Iraq, especially for religious minorities like Yezidis and Christians, remains perilous. Islamic extremism continues to pose an existential threat to our people. Yezidis and other religious minorities live with the fear of increased ISIS activity, which has accelerated over the last year in parts of Iraq and Syria. While we appreciate this successful operation, it would be a dangerous mistake to consider ISIS, its ideology, or the tens of thousands of ISIS male and female members, supporters, detained fighters, and sleeper cells no longer a concern.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/03/remarks-by-president-biden-on-a-successful-counterterrorism-operation/>

² <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/03/1077825951/the-u-s-has-conducted-a-counterterrorism-operation-in-syria>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/aug/04/genocide-yazidi-isis-murderers-trying>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20113>

⁵ <https://freeyezidi.org/fyf-news/fyf-report-the-hardan-atrocities/>



Events like these remind us of what our community has endured. The Free Yezidi Foundation continues to work toward a better future for survivors and families of those who have died at the hands of ISIS. We continue to provide trauma support, training, and pathways to recovery for all Yezidi genocide survivors, no matter their circumstances.

##

For more information, visit www.freeyezidi.org
For press inquiries, write to: info@freeyezidi.org