



Demand for \$1.5 Billion Sinjar Reconstruction Fund by 3 August 2024

27 July 2023

We, a group of Yezidi civil society organizations, community leaders, and intellectuals, call for the special allocation of a \$1.5 billion dedicated fund, directly administered by the office of the Prime Minister of Iraq, for the reconstruction of public infrastructure and private housing and property in the District of Sinjar.

Iraq's Parliament recently approved a three-year working budget of \$459 billion, with an annual budget of \$153 billion, the highest ever passed in the country's history.¹ The Parliament only allocated \$38 million for Sinjar and Nineveh Plain reconstruction in this budget. A realistic fund to reconstruct Sinjar has been proposed by national and international actors to revitalize the region, bring economic development, and help tens of thousands of Yezidis rebuild their properties. A motion was accepted by the Prime Minister's Office in the past, with a budget of nearly 500 billion Iraqi Dinars allocated in principle. But the budget was filibustered by some political parties and cut down to 10% of its original allocation. The budget was then allocated not only for Sinjar but also for Zummar and Nineveh plains.² Sinjar and other areas inhabited mostly by minorities have received disproportionately low funding over the past nine years,³ and our communities are outraged by the inequality of this budget allocation, considering the severe level of destruction in Sinjar and other areas.

Iraq is a middle-income country blessed with enormous oil and gas resources.⁴ The revenue generated from the export of natural resources must benefit all citizens throughout the country without prejudice, including those affected by the Yezidi Genocide committed by Daesh.

Iraq's annual working budget of more than \$150 billion is large enough to allocate one percent of one year's budget to the actual reconstruction of Sinjar, rather than symbolic projects that will never be effective in rebuilding the district, its infrastructure, housing, and private property, and ultimately will never be sufficient to help IDPs return home. Failure to rebuild Sinjar will likely result in increased security concerns and could force more Yezidis to migrate or face secondary displacement. We therefore call upon the Parliament to allocate 1% of the 2023 budget – \$1.5 billion – to a specialized fund for the reconstruction of Sinjar.

The Yezidi Genocide perpetrated by Daesh represents the abject failure of the Iraqi state and the international community to recognize early warning signs of atrocities and prevent genocide and crimes against humanity from occurring.⁵ This failure is compounded by the fact that nine years

¹ ["Iraq approves record \\$153 billion budget including big public hiring,"](#) REUTERS, 11 June 2023.

² ["Analysis: Iraq's new budget may hamper more than it helps,"](#) AL-JAZEERA, 26 June 2023.

³ ["Iraq: political infighting blocking reconstruction of Sinjar,"](#) HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, 6 June, 2023

⁴ ["Iraqi energy reserves exceed \\$15 trillion, senior official claims,"](#) UPSTREAM, 4 July 2023.

⁵ ["They came to destroy': ISIS crimes against the Yazidis,"](#) UNITED NATIONS INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, 15 June 2016.



later, most Yezidi civilians remain internally displaced or have fled Iraq, at significant risk, to seek safety abroad. The proportion of Yezidis who remain displaced is astronomical and far more than any other community in Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of Yezidis remain homeless, displaced in their own country,⁶ with many still living in flammable nylon tents which can barely be described as shelter. Meanwhile, Iraq has proved capable of generating impressive revenue and passing its largest annual spending budget in history.

The larger communities in Iraq are better equipped to advocate for their share of funding in the Iraqi Parliament due to greater representation and political power. This is not the case for the Yezidi community or other minorities communities which lack political influence. Cities in Nineveh and Anbar provinces, such as Mosul – also gravely affected by conflict with Daesh – are being rebuilt due to government support and projects directed toward these cities' reconstruction by powerful political blocs.⁷ It is appropriate that some government funds have been allocated to help the city of Mosul rebuild and recover after the destruction caused by Daesh. But given the terror inflicted on Yezidis, Sinjar district's reconstruction should have been prioritized at least as much as other districts, if not more. Instead, because the community has lacked political clout, Sinjar and its residents have been forgotten, and Yezidi civilians remain homeless.

Now we commemorate nine years since the Yezidi Genocide perpetrated by Daesh. We reiterate that under the Constitution, all Iraqi citizens should be treated equally. As victims of genocide and as a community whose very existence is threatened,⁸ we believe Iraq has a greater responsibility to help Yezidi and minority communities restore their lives and rebuild their districts.

Failure to rebuild Sinjar and restore life for the Yezidi community after the genocide is already a deep wound for our people and a blemish for Iraq as a whole. Action should be taken urgently to rectify this, so that by August 3rd, 2024, meaningful funding and tangible steps are in place to demonstrate to Yezidis that they have a future in Iraq.

For more information, please email info@freeyezidi.org. Your enquiries will be shared with all organizational signatories.

⁶ [“More support needed for survivors of the Sinjar massacre,”](#) INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, 4 August 2022

⁷ [“Mosul on the path to reconstruction five years after its liberation,”](#) UNESCO, 20 July 2022

⁸ [“Sticks, stones, broken homes: Yazidis trapped between displacement and danger,”](#) THE NEW ARAB, 9 June 2022