

Statement of Nadia Murad Basee Taho

June 21, 2016

Honorable members of the Senate

I am deeply grateful to this committee for allowing me to share my story.

We Yazidis are a human society. We are at a critical stage. We love each other as you do. And we love your nation for its history of helping when all seems lost.

Terrorism has destroyed our world and threatens, no doubt, the existence of mankind and civilization as we know it.

Terrorism is destroying the human heritage we have collectively built, not as one people, one nation, one color, one religion, but the civilization we've built together as humans of different cultures and faiths.

I am one of thousands of Yazidi girls that were taken captive by the so-called Islamic State. I had a normal life before August 3rd 2014. I lived with my mother and siblings in peace. Our people go back thousands of years in the heartland of Mesopotamia where civilization was first started.

I was going to high school; I had dreams like every girl in the world.

I wanted to become a teacher and build a family.

My community of about half million people never harmed anyone. We lived in peace with Muslims, Christians and other groups, religious or not.

But our peaceful ways did not save us. The Islamic State militants attacked us in Sinjar with the clear intention to destroy the Yazidi people as a distinctive, non-Muslim religious group.

The Yazidis were given a choice: convert or die.

Unlike others attacked, the Yazidis were denied a third choice – the ability to pay Jeziyah or leave.

Daesh said we were not “People of the Book” - essentially authorizing our men to be killed, our women and children to be enslaved, our property to be confiscated. We were powerless.

More than 3,000 Yazidi men, women and children were killed in two weeks. Hundreds of disabled and elderly that could not escape were slaughtered. Tens of thousands of Yazidi watched in a 75-mile march from Mount Sinjar without water with many getting killed along the way.

Daesh killed my mother and six brothers in one day.

More than 1,600 children were taken from Sinjar to be subjected to ISIL brainwashing and terrorist ideology, including my 13-year-old nephew who has now been brain washed and tells his own mother that she is an Infidel.

More than 3,000 women and girls as young as 8 years were forced to be sex slaves.

I was so forced. I was 19.

My niece Katherine, 19 years old, was killed by an IED as she tried to escape.

Lamia, a 9 years old girl, was also killed escaping with Katherine.

Today captive Yazidis are systematically used as human shields in combat by their ISIS captors.

Daesh has committed genocide against my people, against United Nations law, against US law, the UK parliament, in France and so many others, yet the ISIS or Daesh case has not been referred to the ICC or the international court.

I am sad that the world doesn't focus on bringing such genocidal perpetrators to accountability. It's painful to me as a survivor to see a world that turns away, averting its eyes, ignoring the worst crimes.

Some are old enough to remember what happened in Germany and other places. The civilized world did not act until it was too late.

The Yazidis are experiencing holocaust anew. We suffer a human brutality, murder, sex slavery, and forced displacement.

I have seen Daesh, I have lived under their barbaric rule, I well know the Daesh intention. And they make it clear in their statements.

Daesh intends to rule and destroy the whole world.

The attack on Orlando was so motivated. San Bernardino was so motivated. I send condolences to the families and friends of all victims. There will be more.

Orlando will be repeated if the world doesn't put an end such terrorism. There is no sanctuary. With today's weapons and bioterror, no place is safe for anyone! Daesh is powerful. And it has been helped.

I appeal to you, to this committee, to the US senate and government, and to the American people formally to recognize Yazidi Genocide.

Please help my people. Please work with us to bring Daesh to Justice.

Today the circumference of Daesh control is about 3,000 miles. Help us bring an end to their

rule. Do not let them grow more and more by indifference.

Any form of ambivalence will be felt as encouragement.

The world must act, definitely the USA must act. We must terminate Daesh and all such terror.

We need to act decisively now so that some of the remaining 3,200 Yazidi captives can come back.

I ask the US, also, to work with allies and foe alike to establish a safe and protected zone for Iraqi and Syrian religious minorities. All must agree on this, now. The Yazidi people cannot wait.

Established governments world-wide are threatened as never before.

Learn from the Yazidis experience. Come to us, sit with us, let us teach you what this is like... Visit our people, face and hug our orphaned children, see our unprotected mass graves, view our ravaged farms and hill tops...

Please bring your powers to help, to heal, to solve.

Come share our tears.

Our crisis is your crisis.