

4.10.6. Yazidis

Following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, this document has been reviewed and updated. Please consult '[Interim Country Guidance: Syria \(2025\)](#)'

COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: September 2020

*Minor updates added: April 2024

COI summary

[Main COI reference: [Targeting 2020](#), 10.8, pp. 85-86]

The Yazidi minority consisted of around 550 000 people mainly present in Iraq, but with a substantial number residing in northern Syria, mostly around Hasaka and Aleppo and in the Jabal Sim'an and Afrin valley. Following ISIL attacks on Yazidis in Iraq, the majority of Syrian Yazidis were estimated to have fled. [[Targeting 2020](#), 10.8, p. 85]

In 2014, thousands of Yazidi women were abducted by ISIL in Iraq and brought to Syria to be sold as sex slaves, solely for their religious belief. Many of them are considered to have been found dead in mass graves after the SDF offensive in the last ISIL-held territory in Syria. In March 2019, a large number of Yazidi women were found and taken to Al-Hol camp by the SDF, together with ISIL families. Many of these women had to conceal their ethnic and religious identities fearing retaliation by ISIL supporters. In April 2019, the Yazidi Supreme Spiritual Council issued a declaration accepting Yazidi women survivors into their community, but excluding children born to ISIL fighters as a result of rape. [[Targeting 2020](#), 10.8, pp. 85-86]. A 2022 USDOS report estimated that approximately 6 000 women and children, mainly Yazidis, who had been previously abducted and transferred to Syria by ISIL, have been sold into sex trafficking [[Country Focus 2023](#), 1.3, p. 37].

Different sources stated that in Afrin region, Aleppo governorate, the Yazidi minority was targeted by local actors. FSA forces reportedly rounded up Yazidis and forced them to convert to Islam and demolished their places of worship. [[Targeting 2020](#), 10.8, p. 86]

Following the Turkish-led incursion in northeast Syria in October 2019, many Yazidi villages were deserted, forcing more than 50 000 Yazidis to leave. Yazidi community leaders condemned the bad treatment of minorities including Yazidis at the hands of radical groups allied with Türkiye, alleging that various temples and religious sites were destroyed in Afrin and thousands of Yazidis were displaced. [[Targeting 2020](#), 10.8, p. 86]

Conclusions and guidance

Do the acts qualify as persecution under Article 9 QD?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. forced conversion, physical assault, sexual abuse, killing).



What is the level of risk of persecution (well-founded fear)?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: regional specifics (presence and activity of extremist groups), gender, etc.



Are the reasons for persecution falling within Article 10 QD (nexus)?

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of race/nationality and/or religion.

See other topics concerning ethno-religious groups:

- [4.10.1. Sunni Arabs](#)
- [4.10.2. Kurds](#)
- [4.10.3. Druze](#)
- [4.10.4. Alawites](#)
- [4.10.5. Christians](#)
- [4.10.6. Yazidis](#)
- [4.10.7. Palestinians](#)