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JIMENA
459 Fulton Street.
#207
San Francisco, CA
94102
Tel: (415) 626-5062
Fax: (415) 626-5061
www.jimena.org
info@jimena.org

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Dear Community Members,

In today's turbulent Middle East, one of the region's most ancient indigenous populations is now among the most brutally persecuted: the Yezidi people. In Iraq, 10,000 Yezidi lives have already been claimed by ongoing torture and murder, an atrocity that has led UN human rights investigators to accuse ISIS of genocide. Mass displacement, starvation and sexual enslavement continue to threaten the existence and livelihood of the Yezidi community. Sadly, many other minority groups in Iraq, including Assyrian Christians, Shabaks and some Muslims, are also terrorized and persecuted.

As North America's only organization representing the nearly 1 million Jewish refugees from Arab countries, JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East & North Africa affirms that solidarity and support for Yezidis – and all oppressed religious minorities in Muslim countries – is our implicit responsibility. The current affliction of ethnic cleansing and systemic violence is a devastation we know all too well.

Like Yazidis, Jews are an ancient indigenous community within Iraq, and had thrived in the country for over 3,000 years. With the incumbency of a pro-Nazi government in 1932, conditions quickly deteriorated for Iraqi Jews. This culminated in the *Farhud* (pogrom) of 1941. In the following years, Iraqi Jews endured widespread imprisonment and torture. In 1952, 120,000 Iraqi Jews were stripped of their nationality and exiled from their homes. Today the Jewish community of Iraq is extinct.

We, survivors of ethno-religious persecution in Iraq and throughout the Middle East & North Africa, are determined for history not to repeat itself. We call on the international community to stand in solidarity with Yezidis, to demand an end to this atrocity, and work together to bring greater peace, justice and security for peoples of all faiths, ethnicities and cultures.

Sincerely,

Sarah Levin
Executive Director

Gina Waldman
President