



# **Time to Act Against Turkish War Crimes in Sinjar**

**Report on the Dangerous Effects of Turkey's Attacks on August 16 and 17, 2021**



**Democratic Autonomous Council of Sinjar (MXDŞ)**

**Religious Intolerance**

**Cultural Genocide**

**War Crimes**

**Feminicide**

**Political Genocide**

**Demographic Change**

**Occupation**

**Crimes Against Humanity**

**Time to Stop Turkey!**



**The Democratic Autonomous Council of Sinjar (MXDŞ) was established in January 2015 by the population of Sinjar. Thus, the Ezidi population together with other communities of the region has built the foundation for governing and protecting itself. This was considered necessary due to the devastating experiences our population had made under the rule of both the Iraqi government until 2003 and the KDP from 2003 until 2014. Due to their refusal to protect our community, the population of Sinjar experienced yet another genocide in August 2014. Only due to the intervention of the Kurdish guerrilla and the self-defense forces of Rojava, our community was saved from total annihilation. Since its foundation in early 2015, the MXDŞ has established ten local people`s councils, schools, hospitals, cultural institutions, security forces, self-defense forces and many more institutions in all parts of Sinjar that successfully serve the needs of our people despite the little resources available. Today, all different ethic and religious communities of Sinjar are represented among the 111 delegates of the MXDŞ, its coordination and its different committees. Thus, we continue to strengthen the peaceful coexistence of all communities, peoples and religious groups in the region.**

Sinjar – our home – has yet again become the target of brutal Turkish attacks. On August 16 and 17, 2021, Turkey carried out five air strikes resulting in the death of ten of our citizens and wounding many more. These reckless attacks on our Ezidi community are a continuation of the genocide that the Islamic State (IS) carried out against us in August 2014. The aim is to brake the will of our people and thus pave the way for the implementation of the Sinjar-Agreement of October 9, 2020. At the same time, the most recent attacks are yet another step in Turkey’s dream to change the borders in the region and occupy all of South Kurdistan, including the oil-rich regions of Kirkuk and Mosul. Yet, as the Democratic Autonomous Council of Sinjar (MXDŞ) we refuse to give in to Turkey’s attacks and to the pressure of the Iraqi government, the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and international powers in order to force us to accept the Sinjar-Agreement.

On August 16 and 17, we lost many precious members of our Ezidi community. The attacks on an Ezidi diplomatic delegation on its way to a meeting with Iraqi government officials on August 16 and the bombardment of a hospital frequently used by the civilian population of Sinjar on August 17 clearly constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. With this report we want to inform the public about the destruction and loss of life caused by the most recent Turkish attacks on Sinjar. Thus, we hope to show that it is the urgent responsibility of the international community and every morally thinking person to act against Turkey’s crimes and support the demand of our Ezidi community for autonomy and the right to self-defense.

### **1. August 16: Bombardment of an Ezidi Diplomatic Delegation**

At around noon on August 16, five members of a diplomatic delegation representing our Democratic Autonomous Council of Sinjar (MXDŞ) were targeted by a Turkish air strike while driving through the center of Sinjar city. Two members of the delegation, Seîd Hesên and Îsa Xwedêda, were killed in the attack while Medya Qasim Simo, Şamir Abbas Berces and Mîrza Alî were wounded. At the time, our diplomatic delegation was getting ready for a meeting with Iraqi government officials who had come to Sinjar as part of the visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on that same day.

*A Turkish air strike hit the car of a diplomatic delegation of the MXDŞ on August 16, 2021.*



Seîd Hesên was a very respected member of our Ezidi community. For decades, he had played a leading role in strengthening the political representation of the Ezidi people in Iraq. Based on his strong believe in democratic values and equality he always worked hard to solve the problems of the Ezidi community and built strong ties with the many other communities, peoples and religious groups in Iraq. Due to his great efforts, our Ezidi community succeeded in establishing its official political representation in the form of TEVDA [Tevgera Azadî û Demokrasi a Ezdîya - Ezidi Movement for Freedom and Democracy]. Seîd Hesên was a member of the TEVDA leadership from 2004 to 2014. Thus, he contributed greatly to the democratic self-organization of our Ezidi people and to the establishment of relations based on equality and respect among the many different Iraqi communities.

When IS attacked our home region Sinjar starting on August 3, 2014, Seîd Hesên together with his family and tribe decided to stay and defend our people. Due to the love and respect he had gained among our Ezidi community, his decision to take up arms against IS was crucial for convincing thousands more to stay and defend their homes. Many of his family members lost their lives in the fight against IS. Yet, our friend and leader Seîd Hesên did not only take up arms but also built the basis for the future self-defense of our Ezidi community. By taking an active part in the foundation of the YBŞ (Sinjar Resistance Units) and YJŞ (Sinjar Women`s Units) in 2014/15, he enabled our community to defend itself against the continuing threat of attacks until today. But Seîd Hesên always knew that military self-defense would not be enough to satisfy the needs of our Ezidi people in Sinjar. Therefore, he was one of the leading figures in the establishment of the MXDŞ in early 2015. Most recently, he had again served in the ranks of the YBŞ with the official title of a commander. Yet, among our people he was not only know as a military commander, but as a leader of society who never got tired of solving the problems of our Ezidi community.

## **2. August 17: Air Strikes on a Hospital in Sinjar**

Not even 24 hours after the attacks on our diplomatic delegation, a hospital run by the Health Committee of our MXDŞ was targeted by four Turkish air strikes. The attacks took place in

Seîd Hesên - a leader highly respected in our community - was killed by a Turkish air strike on August 16, 2021.



the village of Sikênîyê located close to the city of Sinjar. Eight people were killed as a result of this Turkish attack. The victims include the four health workers Elî Reşo Xidir, Sedo Îlyas Reşo, Hecî Xidir and and doctor Muhlise Sîdar. The doctor Muhlise Sîdar had come to Sinjar in 2014 as a medical volunteer from North Kurdistan (southeast Turkey) to help provide medical treatment for the local population during the IS attacks. Four members of the YBŞ who were tasked with the protection of the hospital due to the ongoing threat of IS attacks were also killed: the Ezidi YBŞ members Hemîd Sadun and Xidir Şeref and the Arab YBŞ members Ramî El Salim and Meytem Xidir Xelef. Four more persons were wounded in the Turkish bombardment. The YBŞ members receiving treatment at the hospital had played an active role in the protection of Sinjar against IS attacks. After the first air strike had hit the hospital and had wounded several people, civilians and Iraqi soldiers from a nearby military base who were rushing to the scene to help were targeted by three more air strikes. The ruthless targeting of those trying to rescue the wounded led to the high number of casualties.

In a statement on August 17, 2021, the MXDŞ Health Committee condemned the Turkish attack on our hospital. Necla Newaf, member of the MXDŞ Health Committee, declared in the name of the committee that due to the increased spread of the Corona virus in recent weeks in Sinjar, many civilian patients had been at the hospital at the time of the Turkish attack. She stated: “Despite all the obstacles and the lack of state support we served the people of Sinjar in our hospital. Our hospital provided treatment for all the peoples of the region without making any differences between them. We have always given great importance to the health of our people. Now, our hospital has been targeted by a brutal and immoral attack.” Necla Newaf also called on the UN, international health organizations and the Doctors Without Borders to not remain silent towards the war crimes committed by Turkey in Sinjar.

The hospital in the village of Sikênîyê – a former school building – had been established in 2016 after the liberation of the village by the Kurdish guerrilla and YBŞ/YJŞ forces. Ever since, it had been run solely with the resources provided by the local population and the MXDŞ. It had been used both by the civilian population of Sinjar and members of the YBŞ/YJŞ. Being

On August 17, 2021, Turkish drones and fighter jets dropped four bombs that completely destroyed a hospital in the village of Sikênîyê.



one of the few hospitals in the region, it had allowed for the treatment of thousands of people since 2016. Among them, many YBŞ/YJŞ members who had been wounded in the fight against IS had received treatment there.

### 3. Call for International Investigation into Turkish Attacks

As the Democratic Autonomous Council of Sinjar (MXDŞ) and the people of Sinjar we remain committed to strengthening our self-administration and our self-defense forces. The most recent Turkish attacks and the inability of the Iraqi authorities to protect us have once again proven how urgent and necessary this is. We are aware of the hostility of Turkey and other regional and international actors towards our legitimate demand to govern and protect ourselves. Ever since 2014 and especially in the recent past, many international institutions, parliaments and morally thinking people have actively supported our demand for autonomy and the right to self-defense thus contributing greatly to the protection of our Ezidi people. In the light of the renewed brutal attacks by Turkey on our community, we now call for an international investigation into the Turkish attacks on our diplomatic delegation and the hospital in Sinjar. We express our willingness to welcome this delegation to Sinjar and provide it with all the necessary support to shed light on the crimes committed by Turkey against our community. This will be an effective step for preventing future Turkish attacks and will provide the international community with the necessary information to openly condemn the Turkish war crimes.

The information we have provided in this report clearly show that Turkey has committed war crimes by attacking our Ezidi community on August 16 and 17, 2021. These attacks are part of the overall strategy of Turkey to attack all communities, people and religious groups in the region that do not comply with the homogenous identity construct of Turkey itself. In order to achieve its goal, Turkey has developed close relations to a variety of jihadist groups, including IS and al-Nusra, and actively uses these groups to attack and occupy its neighboring countries – including our Ezidi community. The international silence concerning this Turkish policy of war, destabilization, demographic change and occupation is extremely dangerous since it encourages Turkey to widen its attacks in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Caucasus. As

Eight of our community members, including a doctor and three members of the medical staff, were killed on August 17.



one of the communities which is most heavily affected by Turkey's aggressions we therefore call on the international community to break its silence and take effective steps to stop Turkey's dangerous policy.

We consider it as the duty of all international institutions and all governments to take a clear stance against the attacks, massacres, genocides and other crimes committed by Turkey. International NGOs also need to acknowledge the urgency of this issue and put pressure on the UN, the Iraqi government and Turkey. The annihilation attacks on our Ezidi community aim at destroying all human values and norms. Yet, we refuse to become the victims of this inhumane policy. In order to be able to prevent the dangerous consequences of this policy, we consider it necessary to make use of our right to govern and defend ourselves. Only by doing so will we be able to guarantee the survival of our community. By supporting our demands you will make a great contribution to the protection of our most basic rights. Furthermore, you will prevent that the forces which carry out the attacks on us Ezidis achieve their goal of destroying the political, social and legal balance in the region. Therefore, we call for a united struggle together with us to guarantee our communities right to govern and protect itself.

We also consider it vital for the international community to openly condemn the Sinjar-Agreement signed by the Iraqi government and KDP on October 9, 2020. This agreement completely ignores the needs and wishes of the Ezidi population of Sinjar and only paves the way for Turkish attacks on our community. Therefore, we consider this agreement as a clear provocation. Consequently, we also call on the international community to condemn all forces that are collaborating with Turkey, e.g. the KDP and affiliated groups.

**For further information please don't hesitate to contact us:**

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As the MXDŞ, we condemn the Turkish attacks and vow to protect our people.

