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First International Arrest Warrant for Genocide Against the Yazidi

New York (NY) – This weekend, the German newspaper “Welt am Sonntag” [reported](#) that in December, the German Federal Prosecutor’s Office obtained an international arrest warrant for a high-ranking ISIS commander who according to [sources](#) was “significantly responsible to the sexual slavery of Yazidi women and girls.” The warrant for genocide and war crimes, would be the first international arrest warrant for what is an ongoing genocide against the Yazidi.

“We applaud the German investigators for taking this hugely important first step to ensuring justice for the women and girls who are victims of ISIS’s genocide,” says Stephanie Johanssen, UN and EU Advocacy Director of the Global Justice Center. “This genocide has been ongoing since August 2014 and while there has been international condemnation of these crimes, there has not been a single prosecution for genocide. We commend Germany for taking international leadership and acting on their legal [obligations](#) to prevent, suppress and punish genocide.”

In December of 2015, the Global Justice Center (GJC) sent a [letter](#) to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in support of an Article 15 communication by Yazda and the Free Yazidi Foundation, urging them to investigate ISIS’s crimes against Yazidi women and girls as genocide, in particular the non-killing crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. These crimes include forcible transfer, rape, torture, enslavement, forcible marriage, forcible impregnation, and forced abortions.

“The ways these crimes are being carried out are sharply divided among [gender lines](#). Any actions to punish these genocidal acts must take into account the gender specific elements of genocide,” says Global Justice Center President, Janet Benshoof. “The victims of ISIS deserve to see justice.”

“Genocide prosecutions are enormously important to deter and delegitimize ISIS’s atrocities. While Germany’s actions are commendable, they should also be the first step,” says Benshoof. “3,000 women and girls remain in ISIS captivity today. If the international community is going to live up to the mandate of the Genocide Convention to protect diversity, then there must also be action to prevent genocide and rescue these women and girls.”

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