

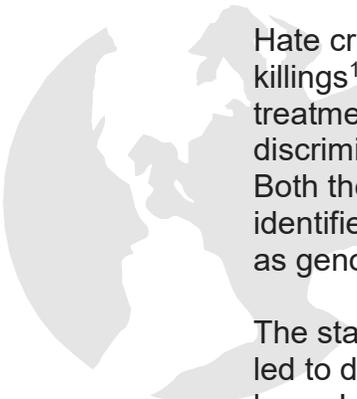


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# Mandaean Human Rights Group

## Mandaeans of Iraq since 2015

The Mandaeans is an an ethno-linguistic-religious minority lived in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq and Iran) for thousands of years. They, along with minorities in Iraq, are still facing extremely difficult and dangerous times. Amid the deterioration of the Iraqi Government authority to the sectarian/religious divide, the lawlessness, the control of Sharia laws on the different aspects of the Iraqi civil society and the rise of ISIS in the west with its catastrophic implications on Iraq, all that has made the life of Mandaeans inside Iraq subject to peril.



Hate crimes on the popular level and injustice on the official level include: killings<sup>1</sup>, rape, kidnapping for ransom, discrimination in courts by the treatment as second class citizens, illegal confiscation of property, discrimination in jobs and employment, and forceful conversions to Islam. Both the European parliament and the US State Department have accurately identified what is happening to the Mandaeans and other minorities in Iraq as genocide<sup>23</sup>

The statics have showed that the ISIS takeover of Mosul in 2014, which has led to deep changes in Iraqi society, more Mandaeans have been forced to leave Iraq. Less than (10,000) ten thousand Mandaeans are currently living in Iraq.

Mandaeans have no place to voice their dilemma effectively in Iraq. Representation of the Mandaeans in the Iraqi parliament is a sham. The Mandaean representative was not chosen by the Mandaeans inside Iraq but rather by general election. That flawed system allows any major party to get that seat by instructing few of its members to give their votes to a collaborator and take that seat from the true mandaeen nominee that denies any true representation. The Mandaeans and other religious minorities have asked to establish the Minorities Security Counsel under international supervision but that demand faced resistance from the Iraqi government.

The statistics for the refugees that the MHRG have are as follows:

**In Syria**, there are 175 Mandaeans. These Mandaeans need urgent help due to the dangerous situation in Syria. Some of them were not accepted as refugees by the UNHCR for qualification reasons at the time of application.

Scared and unable to go back to Iraq, they need urgent help. The MHRG. (Mandaean Human Right Group) has been in continues contact and meetings with the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva.

**In Turkey** about 350 Mandaeans. The refugees' resettlement process is lengthy and some have been waiting for many years. The new refugees are allocated to varies regions within Turkey which are not the refugees' own choice. As a result, some refugees are allocated in remote villages and sometimes, cold mountainous areas far away from other members and groups of their own refugee's communities. They are dealt with mostly by Turkish officials and not by UNHCR personnel. The Turkish officials do not recognize other religious minorities such as Mandaeans, so interviews can be biased as Mandaeans are afraid to express freely the religious percussion they face in Iraq at the hands of Muslim extremists to the Turkish authorities.

**In Jordan**, there are about 1,400 Mandaeans. They live by their own means and receive very little help if any from anyone. All are in UNHCR pipelines. It is urgent that their precarious situation should be taken into consideration.

**In Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Malaysia, Indonesia** there is a total of about 100 Mandaeans from both Iraq and Iran; all in limbo, awaiting resettling, with no end in sight.

The community organizations, including Mandaean Human Right Group are still working with governments and UNHCR offices and other NGOs to help for relocate and resettle these refugees.<sup>4</sup>

Mandaean communities in Diaspora are trying to build community centers and Mandis (prayer place) where ever Mandaeans are. There are over 10,500 Mandaeans in Sweden, in Australia around (10,000) about (8000) in North America, over (4,000) in Holland, around (1000) in each of UK, Denmark, France, Swaziland, Norway, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

The Mandaean religion does not accept converts or marriages with non-Mandaeans. That is why the congregation of Mandaeans in few places only is crucial for their survival. This point has been emphasized repeatedly to the UNHCR and government reprehensive, unfortunately the resettlement of Mandaeans in one place is seldom taken into consideration.

Mandaeans are trying their best to survive outside their homelands, confronted with these current threatening circumstances, facing tremendous difficulties including the being targeted by proselyting movements from other religious groups who target needy refugees to brain wash and convert them, finishing what the extremist failed to do by force.<sup>5</sup>

Mandaean are trying to make virtual communities and to keep the connection and communications open among themselves through

organizations such as Mandaean Associations Union ([www.mandaeanunion.org](http://www.mandaeanunion.org)) and social media. They are still a close-knit community despite their geographical fragmentation. Mandeans hope that in the future a country, like Australia, USA, or Sweden, would bring together, and resettle, as one religious and ethnic group. All the Mandaean refugees currently scattered (and in limbo) throughout the world.

The Mandaean demand both in the homeland and in diaspora can be summarized by the following:

- The Mandeans are indigenous to Mesopotamia (modern Iraq and Iran) and the majority of Mandeans from Iraqi. The Iraqi government therefore is especially responsible for protecting those who are still in Iraq and to allow them to practice their religion, to bring up their children according to their religious convictions, and to safeguard their culture.
- The Iraqi government should work hand in hand with civil society to secure a better future for the generation of Iraqis to come and put an end to the cycle of sectarian, religious, and ethnic violence. Establishing a “minority security council” representing religious minorities to guarantee a swift response in cases of emergency, and to implement permanent solutions to such ethno-religious problems. Such a council would act along with international supervision to guarantee its success.
- There is an urgent need for the improvement in the Iraqi justice system, for the Iraqi government to investigate, prosecute and punish hate crimes against minorities, which include the confiscation of property, kidnapping, and rape; it is urgent to consider such crimes as Hate crimes against humanity, and therefore for the International community to get involved in such investigations.
- It is also of vital importance to enable religious minorities including the Mandeans to maintain their religious places of worship and religious institutions and that adequate resource should be made available to them (as well as all ethno-religious minorities) allowing the free practice of religious ceremonies, and use of language; thus, preserving an important part of Iraqi heritage.
- Especially since 2003, Mandeans have been subjected to serious ethnic cleansing. As consequences to that 85% of the
- Mandaean community in Iraq were forced to escape from their own homeland, Iraq, and to relocate to other neighboring countries

such as Syria and Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon or Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia to find safe heavens waiting for resettlement in safer countries.

- The international community should look kindly to help the Mandaean refugees to re-establish their community as one group.
- We are asking that UNHCR, along with countries like the USA, UK, Australia, Sweden, Netherlands to have special attention and find a lasting solution for the mandaeen refugee crisis in Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon as a small ethnic linguistic religious minority threatened with genocide.
- The Mandaean have the right for a modified self-determination where their choice of living in one country can be granted by the UN and the international community via a special resettlement program.
- The Mandaean community collectively and as refugees are entitled for compensations from the Iraqi government and the coalition forces for failure to protect and loss of their culture, community and livelihood. Application of the international laws will grant them these rights.

The mandaeen Human Rights Group  
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mandaeenunion.com/mhrg/item/2000-genocide-against-the-mandaeans>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/european-parliament-recognizes-isis-killing-religious-minorities-genocide-423008>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mandaeenunion.com/mhrg/item/1851-isis-atrocities>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mandaeenunion.com/mhrg/item/1850-mandaeen-human-rights>

<sup>5</sup>

<http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=masters>