



Internally Displaced People (IDP) in Nineveh. Photo by Mark Lattimer.

‘Ceasefire gives us our voice’

Headline Independent Evaluation of the Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights (‘Ceasefire’) project ‘Strengthening legal protection for civilians and promoting reparations for violations in Iraq’ 2020-24

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Executive Summary

Given the mass human rights violations, including killings, enslavement and rape from which this project stems, the relevance of the intervention is in no doubt. Nor is the relevance of the current context; 'Iraq remains in a transitional phase... vulnerable to major shocks and with security on the ground elusive. Conflict-related civilian deaths continue to average several hundred a year, including from ISIS remnants'.¹

Evaluators concur that 'Major progress has nonetheless been achieved by the project across its main objectives'.

This appears to be partly a product of Ceasefire's approach. The quotation for the title of this report 'Ceasefire gives² us our voice' came from Arez Sediq, Deputy Director of the project's major partner, ASUDA, based in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. He added 'They don't treat us as a sub-grantee. They give us the sense that we know the reality on the ground. Their support to human rights defenders is key... a great tool for women activists and human rights defenders... we have a really good experience; they are with us for the long-term'.

Another anonymous Key Informant (KI) added 'The way that Ceasefire works is fascinating, and it is the real work of NGOs. They should all be like this, others monitor from above. Ceasefire meets the requirement but they listen to their partners'.

The conclusion is that the project has surpassed or met almost all of its targets, and met the DAC Criteria, as detailed under Conclusions. The main challenge on reparations - after the tireless work of publicising, gathering evidence, making legal representations - is of attempting to ensure the concrete goals of recompense to those who badly need it. Some transactions completed before 2014 have still not been paid out by the Iraqi government, and this is an area where the influence of Ceasefire and other newer advocates is limited. Ceasefire also plans to support efforts in the USA to secure recompense for the smaller number of people still suffering from air strikes, and this legal work may or may not prove to be quicker and more impactful.

Recommendations are found [here](#): In summary, efforts should be made to expand and continue the project's work, particularly in Nineveh Governorate. Networking should connect Ceasefire's work in Federal Government and Kurdish-controlled areas. A longitudinal evaluation should be considered, to measure long-term impact. Ceasefire should continue to consider how it can support children born of rape in the 2014-2017 ISIS wars.

Impact towards the project's main objectives can only be achieved slowly, including: civil society capacity-building; the extent of reparations secured (not only submitted) for civilian harm, including potentially from the US; and the successful proposal and implementation of new civilian protection legislation.

Swiss funding for this project has now come to an end, with appreciation expressed by Key Informants of this research. As Ceasefire remarks: 'With progress to stabilisation in Iraq still fragile, the need to improve civilian protection remains acute'. The project continues, with funding for some elements secured and an active search for donors continuing. Khidher Domie adds, 'The Swiss are very welcome; we need sustainable funding on human rights matters.'

¹ All quotations on this page are from the Ceasefire Operational Report, March 2024

² The exact quote was 'Ceasefire give us our voice', referring to the staff of Ceasefire .. This is amended for ease of reading to say that the organisation 'Ceasefire 'gives' us our voice; more common usage, with the same underlying meaning.

Background

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs³ supported this project for a period of four years, with a further three month no-cost extension. The project built on funding from the Swiss Government for Ceasefire in Iraq dating back to 2017.

Results evaluated included:

1. Strengthened capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and civilian activists to monitor and document violations securely in preparation for reparation claims.
2. Increased ability of civilian victims of conflict in Iraq to submit credible claims for reparation under national programme(s) and secure redress.
3. New legislation passed in Iraq to implement international obligations to strengthen civilian protection and protect human rights.
4. Regular and reliable information on violations & rights of vulnerable civilians in Iraq (inc. minorities) made available quickly and transparently to local, national and international authorities and the media.
5. Greater priority given to reparations and protection of vulnerable civilians by national/international actors, including UN human rights mechanisms, International Non- Government Organisations (INGOs), others working on governance and reconstruction in Iraq.

Results 1 and 4 Components 1-3 above were included in the consultant's NORAD 2022 evaluation of NORAD-funded activities (NORAD being a co-funder on this project), whose findings are reviewed along with those of other evaluations, and expanded. This includes Ceasefire's reporting platform for violations, training programmes for activists, and a programme of small grants for CSOs. Results 2, 3 and 5 Components 4 and 5 will be covered with fresh research, giving greater emphasis to the legal support aspect. This includes evaluating Ceasefire's office in Mosul which provides legal support for reparations and its Technical support to the Iraqi parliament in drafting legislation.

The project responded to pressing needs related to human rights. The human rights context remains extremely precarious and delicate in Iraq.

The themes of the project are of the gravest seriousness, including 'Acts of sexual violence...against Yazidis and other Iraqi components, crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.' The formation of the 2022 Iraqi Government has created potential, some of which has been realised, with buy-in from many parliamentary parties. Ceasefire held AVAW sessions with the Women's Committee in the Parliament in summer 2023, but conservative elements mean that progress on women's rights remains slow and partial.

One anonymous male KI commented 'The justice system is corrupt and slow' in implementing what he called 'the extremely good reparation law'. These accusations are underlined by Human Rights Watch, in their report 'Iraq: Flawed Implementation of Yazidi Compensation Law', which proposes quicker service by an end to the requirement for survivors to file a criminal complaint.

³ along with NORAD, and the Allen & Overy Foundation

Evaluation Consultancy Team (henceforth ‘the Team’ or ‘We’)

David Hampson ([LinkedIn](#)) evaluated Ceasefire’s NORAD-funded work in Iraq in 2022, which covered 2/5 of the key areas in this programme. He has intermittently undertaken independent consultancy work for Ceasefire partner Minority Rights Group (MRG) for 28 years in 12 roles including on Global Strategy, Capacity Building and Programmes. He served at consultancy and senior levels for DFID, UNFAO, IFRC, Oxfam, Save the Children, Christian Aid, VSO etc. on the nexus of humanitarian, development and rights’ action in 60+ countries.

Ava Batay-an ([LinkedIn](#)) is a rights’ professional; an Indigenous Person whose early career responded to grassroots disaster and environmental rights concerns. She has since worked on the evaluation of the NORAD-funded Ceasefire Iraq programme, with MRG on global strategy and capacity and at senior/consultant levels with CARE, CRS, DFID and VSO. She recently led WHO’s community engagement on Health Emergency Response in the Philippines.

Romina Vegro ([LinkedIn](#)) has worked for over twenty years in the international development and humanitarian sectors in Europe, Africa and South Asia both in the UN system and the NGO sector. She brings experience in monitoring and reporting, advocacy, proposal writing and grant management.

Glossary

ASUDA: ASUDA for Combating Violence Against Women

AVAW: Against (or Anti) Violence Against Women

Ceasefire: Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

FoRB: Freedom of Religious Belief

GBV: Gender Based Violence

IILR: The Institute for International Law and Human Rights

INGO: International Non-Government Organisation

KI(I): Key Informant (Interview)

KRI: Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

Participant: is used rather than ‘beneficiary’

SGBV: Sexual and Gender Based Violence

Methodology

- Analysis of evaluations and reports.
- Web-based interviews with KIs provided by Ceasefire and new interviewees suggested by KIs. Generic guide questions are shown in [Appendix Three](#).
- This was primarily a Desk Evaluation. The evaluators had difficulties reaching female participants due to cultural reasons and suspicion, which led to anonymity and language restrictions. These obstacles were tackled by (i) attempting to contact four female trainees from the Iraq NORAD project and (ii) sending six questions (see [Appendix Four](#) to Ceasefire’s Lawyer Zeinab Hamama in Mosul to ask of five female participants (‘beneficiaries’).
- Research included a detailed look at ASUDA, the project’s main partner, a women’s NGO founded in 2000, mainly working on AVAW, GBV, SGBV, protection, empowerment and advocacy.
- Hypotheses were formed and checked with KIs including Ceasefire.
- Conclusions were made against standard DAC criteria, overall and by location, leading to [Recommendations](#).

Findings

Previous Work: Review of the NORAD report findings of the evaluator in 2022: The Team had evaluated two of the five components as part of a wider NORAD-funded project on global FoRB found [here](#). Some of the findings were as follows:

- Value-for-money interventions: Miriam Puttick, ex- of Ceasefire said, ‘We have managed to do more. We used budgets and saved lots of money to develop online material.’
- Significant casework: Ceasefire’s monitoring tools had recorded 2119 cases from July 2020 to January 2021.
- The project’s special reports had received positive replies, including from UN Special Rapporteurs. The Iraq report had drawn reference in UN research into refugee and asylum land.
- Frustration at the visibility limitation to such a significant global problem as FoRB
- Continuous Ceasefire work and subgrants had already been a catalyst for the successful, and crucial, passing of the Yezidi Survivors Law in the Iraqi Parliament, paving the way for reparations for Yezidis (and ultimately other) genocide survivors.
- Sustainability: Yomn Al-Kaisi, ex- of Ceasefire, said of the monitoring tool, ‘We are documenting violence and results will be seen in 10 years. We are attempting to change the way one speaks about minorities.’
- Interventions from partners were also relevant in meeting the MTE recommendation of creating public awareness. Salam Omer (Kirkuknow) explained that “Iraqi media is divided among ethnic and religious lines, so there’s hardly enough space for minorities, you can hardly see positive stories and objective reporting about minorities. So what we did is to counter that, to feed objective reporting and that’s one of the aims of the project”.
- As a summary, the 2022 work concluded that the project had met the DAC Criteria and provided value-for-money to the donor.

Research on areas not covered under NORAD, particularly legal advice from the Mosul Office and technical support to the Iraqi parliament in drafting legislation

Literature Search / Meta Analysis of previous evaluative work

The following documents were reviewed:

The Results matrix of the project shows that at **Impact Level** targets were almost all met as of March 2024. Noteworthy is a very low baseline position before the project started, of widespread violations, reparation delays and laws of varying quality. The Yezidi Female Survivors Law is a significant achievement for Ceasefire and other advocates, and for the Iraqi Government, despite its highly flawed, bureaucratic and legal institution-centred implementation. Despite these obstacles, 140 of the target 150 reparations were made, with the target to be surpassed within 2024. The UN Universal Periodic Review documents (mid-term) of 2022 showed progress confirmed on 5 recommendations and renewed commitment on a further 5 recommendations.

At **Objective level**, in December 2023, 89 Ceasefire-trained Civil Society Organisation (CSO) activists (60% women) demonstrated human rights knowledge and used their increased monitoring and advocacy skills in civilian rights advocacy. This exceeded targets of 60 activists of whom 50% were to be women.

Perhaps the most impressive result at this level was that 1,189 violation cases (target 250) for reparations have been documented and nearly 300 claims (target 250) submitted to date. As stated in the reports on the Ceasefire Mosul Office, this constitutes a significant achievement.

Targets were also surpassed on the quoting of Ceasefire data in the UN Iraq UPR, by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, by UNOCHR and through numerous mentions on UN ReliefWeb & UNHCR RefWorld 89.

At **Results level 1** on strengthened capacity to monitor and document violations securely in preparation for reparation claims, in addition to those mentioned at impact level, the target was met of 4 sub-grants to CSOs awarded and implemented on minority rights, diversity and missing persons issues.



Legal help centre poster on bullet-scarred wall, Mosul. Phot by: Mark Lattimer

At **Results level 2**, on increased ability of civilian victims to submit credible claims for reparation and secure redress, legal assistance was provided to 634 (target 350) civilian victims/ families (1/3 female clients). Nearly 300 full claims (target 250) were submitted and successful decisions (compensation award) were made in 140 cases to date (target 150, which is likely to be surpassed in 2024).

Result 3 aimed for ‘new legislation passed in Iraq to implement international obligations to strengthen civilian protection and protect human rights’. The project target has been met with the passage of the Yezidi Survivors Law and incorporation of key concerns on VAW and enforced disappearances into the revised drafts of relevant bills (3rd draft).

Result 4, on the provision of regular and reliable information on rights violations, reported quickly and transparently is more within Ceasefire’s control. The 2019 baseline was low, with no other authority reporting on the specific violations. Ceasefire has published 4 new reports on enforced disappearance, reparations, militia violations and VAW, all in English and Arabic. All 4 reports /bulletins have been disseminated to over 500 stakeholders, and the reparations reports earned over 15,000 social media impressions.

Result 5 is on Ceasefire encouragement of greater priority given to reparations and civilian protection by national and international actors, including UN human rights mechanisms, international agencies and other actors on governance and reconstruction in Iraq. Overall targets have been surpassed, with two international advocacy missions (100% women), three national missions, ad hoc international meetings with stakeholders and one further UNHRC meeting planned. It was also reported that IOM is now working on a project supporting survivors’ reparations, with the Norwegian Refugee Council also agreeing in principle to implement a reparations programme. In addition, the Iraq UPR was published in March 2020, and the Iraqi Government agreed to five recommendations on enforced disappearance, 13 on minorities and over 30 on VAW.

An even more detailed report has already been submitted to the donor, Ceasefire's 'Final report by activity/result area'. This evaluation concurs with the conclusions of the report.

The above results show prolonged dedication to achieving agreed results, and success particularly where the results are largely within Ceasefire's own scope.

Mosul Office 2023 Annual Report: The report is well written, and highly positive in its language; its opening 54 word paragraph includes 'unwavering commitment... effectively managed an impressive total of 634 cases... Notably... our efforts enabled us to extend aid to 212 individuals, reflecting our ongoing dedication'. It's an unusual style for a formal document, and the Consultant responsible for final translation, Khaled Zaza, comes across as much an advocate as a Consultant. But he said simply 'We are proud of what we have achieved'.

The 2023 Report asserts '[The Mosul] centre has become a haven for the affected, offering not just legal advice but also psychological support; the follow-up to a caseload of 1313 civilians is particularly impressive. On occasion, this includes a staff member attending Court in lieu of a female claimant, at other times it involves training on reparations...'.

The above notwithstanding, some older transactions completed before 2014 have not been paid out by the Iraqi government, and some claimants have lost their transaction documents. Injured individuals face difficulties in obtaining medical reports or hospital admission papers, as hospitals were administratively run by ISIS during their control. There have also been cases where individuals have lost faith in the compensation process due to the lengthy and complex procedures, and thus, they have not pursued their compensation claims.

Difficulties in registering the office, and budgetary constraints were reported as mitigating factors. This research concludes that environmental factors - particularly the failure of the Government to create a tailor-made administrative system for compensation – were more pertinent in the slow and partial provision of compensation to date.

Miriam Puttick's excellent work for Ceasefire '[They are in control](#)', is a detailed and illuminating snapshot of environmental factors in Iraq, covering paramilitary appropriation of power and minority insecurity. It provided valuable information to the evaluation.

2023 recommendations for the Mosul Office included:

- Dialogue sessions with officials responsible for the compensation file in Nineveh.
- Advocacy/support for compensation cases, and exploring ways to reduce the burdens.
- Train new lawyers at the Centre.
- Publicity to encourage people who have abandoned their transactions or have not yet applied.
- Psychological support workshops for those affected.

All of these were undertaken, and one new lawyer, Zeinab Mahami was instrumental in the conduct of this research, interviewing female participants ('beneficiaries').

The **Ceasefire platform** is found [here](#) for the reporting of human rights abuses. Ceasefire directs volunteer researchers, and supports civilians, guiding them how to collect documentation and add it to the map, and monitoring the results. KI Khidher Domie used the platform for over three years and found it to be 'excellent'. He feels it gives agency and voice to normal Iraqis witnessing and suffering abuse, particularly in the ex-ISIS controlled areas. We see great value in the Platform's enabling of civilians, activists and others to publicly post over 3,800 assertions of human rights abuses in Iraq.



Documenting damage from airstrike, Qaraqosh, Nineveh. Photo by: Mark Lattimer.

Another major area of work for Ceasefire during the duration of the project has been the advocacy carried out around the passing of the 'Yezidi Survivors Law'. On 1 March 2021, after nearly two years of deliberations, Iraq's parliament passed the Yezidi Female Survivors' Law. Ceasefire and others provided technical support to the parliament through multiple briefings - all of high standard. This law has formed the basis for reparation for women from a minority-background from the ISIS-Iraqi Government war between 2013-19, and critically in

Nineveh⁴ province, in addition to the older Law 20 on reparations.. Many organisations advocated on the Law; Ceasefire has a good claim to have been influential, being able to show a continuous flow of dedicated work.

Throughout the long process of legislation-formation and implementation, Ceasefire and partner NGO IILHR are judged to have been assiduous in their advocacy task, providing detailed recommendations during the passage of legislation and a briefing the month after the Law passing. Its victim-centred tenor can be estimated by its phrases such as 'inclusive' 'as swiftly as possible' 'additional branches' 'sufficient human and financial resources' 'single input point for all services and benefits' 'more accessible' 'consult' 'mobile application offices' 'online' 'free' 'remotely' 'trained' 'representation' 'complaints' 'flexible and appropriate' 'simplified' and 'confidentiality'. It proposed collaboration within wider services, including education and employment. Support was also given on prosecution of crimes; again, this was comprehensive, detailed, gave options and benchmarks against international protocols and precedents.

Ceasefire advocated on the importance of maximising the administrative – rather than judicial – nature of reparation mechanisms; this request was not fully heeded, and – partly as a result in our opinion – the implementation of the law has indeed been mired in both bureaucracy and corruption. Nor was there any concession made to Ceasefire's advocacy for 'determining eligibility solely on the basis of the violation suffered, without any reference to ethnic, religious, gender, or political criteria', and extending reparations to a defined group of indirect victims. The failure to take a survivor-centric approach, for example, left women to bear the doleful burden in which children whose (in many cases rapist) biological fathers are unknown must be raised as Muslim or else be denied education and other social services.

Ceasefire and IILHR have also been active in follow up advocacy following the passing of the Law, drafting a proposal for amendment. The proposal provides a detailed analysis, case-by-case with

⁴ This extensive Province (whose capital is Mosul) is most frequently spelled 'Nineveh' and can also be spelled as Ninweh, Nineva, Ninawa etc.

international benchmarks⁵, of what had been the proposed Draft Law, with carefully but simply-argued cases for multiple amendments. This painstaking and practical approach was followed throughout the programme (for example in December 2022 the advocacy noting that penalty guidelines had not been included in proposed VAW legislation). The Parliament's acceptance or rejection of the changes proposed by Ceasefire and others was viewed by KIs, and evaluators, as significant in the overall level of justice and service accessed by those who suffered in the ISIS-Iraqi Government conflict.

Findings: New research and validation from Key Informants (KIs)

In Iraqi Government-administered areas – five female participants in the Mosul compensation project were interviewed by Lawyer Zeinab Mahami . They reported that all legal services towards potential compensation were provided to them free of charge, which would otherwise cost up to \$500. Lawyer Zeinab Mahami confirmed this figure. Other KIs commented that lawyers' fees for taking a case to Court could total more than \$1,000 'to cross (or circumvent) the bureaucracy, (to avoid having to come) two or three times for investigation. Either way, such sums are clearly way beyond the reach of the economically-disadvantaged targets of the support, a finding which underlines the project's relevance and targeting.

One interviewee stated, 'The Centre's lawyers are easy to reach and very cooperative, as they make continuous communications and send lists that contain detailed procedures...I faced great challenges and obstacles and (had) decided to abandon the compensation transaction, but because of the lawyers of the Legal Help Centre and their psychological support and guidance, the transaction was completed'.

Another person interviewed did not feel that it was an obstacle that Ceasefire had only one female employee, 'Not so, as I visited the centre many times and did not face a problem. There was a woman and a man, and the call was always made by a woman.' This opinion was backed up by the relevant female employee.

The fifth interviewee called for project continuation. 'Of course, support for this project is very important because it helps hundreds of poor people who do not have enough money to hire a lawyer to obtain their rights. Rather, we contact the Centre to obtain free services and guidance on legal procedures that we do not know about...Such actions must receive greater support to include the largest number of affected citizens'.

The above interviews were conducted by Zeinab Mahami, a Ceasefire Lawyer in the Mosul Centre. In a KII, she also related that the Centre was 'receiving calls from various governorates of Iraq, not only from Mosul, asking us to guide them and help them obtain their rights...People are beginning to know Ceasefire and its work in Mosul'. When asked the key to this growing reputation, she answered. 'It is about people, the daily contact is essential... We help everybody, irrespective of religion'.

KI Arez Sediq, Deputy Director of ASUDA (women's organisation), explained that survivors had been a central focus of the intense and successful lobbying to create a new reparations law: 'They were a huge area of survivors, but not the only survivors... the government wanted to expand the scope... and we supported this [the broadening to other sects and to male as well as female survivors], women and men were part of the process... a lot of [our] work is training activists and human rights defenders... we invite them all together for a two-day training...' He conceded that, as far as the Yezidi Survivors Law was concerned, success had been partial. 'There are many challenges, many gaps, the main

⁵ In the authors' opinion, this is an excellent, if rare, use of an international NGO's access to a wealth of international understanding unlikely to be available to many within their Host Government.

problem is implementation, there is a lot of bureaucracy... Quite a small number of people have received money’.

Arez was fulsome in his praise of Ceasefire’s partnership model. He said ‘They give capacity support.



Documenting damage from ISIS inside a church Nineveh (east Mosul). Photo by: Mark Lattimer.

Grant management, how to fundraise, how to present a report. In finance, they gave us the guidelines and training... they are with us for the long-term... really good experience... They invited us to international events to give us experience of INGOs and other partners’. He concluded ‘The way that Ceasefire works is fascinating, and it is the real work of NGOs. They should all be like this, others monitor from above. Ceasefire meets the requirement but they listen to their partner. Ceasefire gives us our voice’. Arez said he knew Miriam Puttick, ex-Ceasefire staff member, but did not know Khaled Zaza, and agreed that our Team could provide the linkage.

KI **Khidher Domie** describes himself as an ‘Expert and Trainer in Media, Peace-building and minorities in Iraq and KRI’. He is a member of a peacebuilding and conflict resolution study centre and a Yezidi activist. He has worked on a freelance basis for more than 10 years with ASUDA on Yezidi Survivors and also between 2016 and 2017 provided training on women’s leadership skills, peace and security, all over the north of Iraq with the organisation. He has also worked with UN Women on the role of men and teachers on AVAW.

He was linked in with Miriam Puttick of Ceasefire early in the project and feels that there were not more partners because of budgetary constraints. Khidher is still pursuing the work they did together on the Survivor Law with regards to implementation in which there are ‘a lot of difficulties’. He is less connected to Consultant Khaled Zaza and to the Ceasefire Office in Mosul and would like to be; during this research we took the simple step of putting the relevant staff in contact. Khidher reported that Ceasefire works in a professional way, with high co-operation.

As with all other KIs expressing an opinion, and despite his focus on Yazidi women, he was supportive of extending the Survivors' Law to all sufferers; men and boys, and other religious groups. All KIs felt that the law kept a specificity for the suffering of Yazidi women (slavery, rape, denial of FoRB for ensuing children, genocide etc) but had allowed positive steps for other female sufferers who had routinely been 'used' by ISIS for marriage. He acknowledged that others had argued against the softening of focus from Yazidi women, but himself feels that the registration of all those who suffered is an important step.

Under the Ceasefire project, Khidher's organisation received a small grant of £6,000-7000 pounds, training journalists on how to write on religious diversity. In what was a common refrain of KIs here (and in many human rights projects globally) he commented 'It went very well but the amount was very small, we could not continue'. Nonetheless, he reported that some of the journalists have actively continued supporting social cohesion and diversity in both the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and in Baghdad. Overall, he regarded it as, 'A very small grant but very successful...strong people coming, training them well, pushing them to continue working with other people and (to) affect the grassroots, we are still looking for funds for that'.

He feels that budget reductions to human rights in Iraq is limiting the logical extension of Human Rights training throughout Iraq, and limiting advocacy to counter a tendency within government to ignore the rights issue but only to see abuses from a religious/ethnicity perspective.

From Europe, we interviewed **Rami Maarawi**, **Ceasefire Programme Coordinator of the MENA Region**, who had worked for less than three months in the role.

Khaled Zaza, whose consultancy company is sub-contracted by Ceasefire, is based in Norway. He was interviewed alongside Algawos Alshamry ('Aws'). The Ceasefire Project Coordinator. Khaled travels at least twice a year to Iraq and speaks to Aws at least three times a week. Zaza's guides, compiles and translates the annual report for Ceasefire, drafts grant applications from the Mosul Office and provides support on the website and wherever needed.

An interesting reporting obstacle was reported by Khaled Zaza: 'It's really hard to get official numbers. We can get them from a politician trying to brag about results. Is it true? No. When we go to official sources, we get a number. But nothing on their website, we have estimates. We see that it is slow. People previously haven't been paid. Lately they have been facilitating payments'.

2023 saw more than 50 instances where individuals coming to the centre had been affected by airstrikes conducted by the international coalition. Zaza is optimistic that cases brought by Ceasefire in the US might bear fruit for those affected. He also notes that 'This year⁶ we have conducted six field tours in Al-Ayman, registering over 130 new cases. A significant accomplishment of our centre has been the development of a comprehensive guide in collaboration with the University of Mosul and its academics' (distributing to academics etc is seen as an outcome).

Zaza also advocates for additional funding: 'We also have a small budget. We want to do more, specifically in Mosul. It is a poor city which has gone through a lot. Aws and Mustafa and Zainab are ambitious people who want to do a lot... and I would have loved to cover for all civilians and complete their case'.

A common form of challenge appears to be the award of compensation way below the value of houses blown up or injuries suffered, at 50% or even lower. 'There is one guy who suffers from a severe injury. He gets offered a small amount. How could he get only 15% of what is due to him when he

⁶ Written in 2023

can't even walk? If I cannot cover the transportation costs, that % remains low. But when I send him with Mustafa to the lawyer, the percentage gets higher... We have a child who was one year old when he was subject to an airstrike. He was hit in the skull, now he is mentally challenged. When he went to a doctor, he would not link the injury to the airstrike because he was scared. But when a lawyer represented the child and explained it, we managed to get an official paper from the doctor, who is the one with the power.' Khaled Zaza concludes that powerful people will only move in support of marginalised people when they have an advocate on their own level.

From various locations around the world, anonymous participants gave more pointed criticism of the Iraqi Government, with particular reference to how many Ceasefire April 2021 recommendations went unheeded, and in agreement with the Human Rights Watch observations about failed implementation. KIs said variously 'Unfortunately Iraq does not care about any international papers, just about Sharia Law... we still need advocacy for women especially. You saw that last Iraqi perspective on gender. The term gender has become forbidden, we can not use it... just 'social justice between men and women' ... They stopped NGOs working in gender, they want to make a statement'.

Another anonymous KI said 'the justice system is corrupt and slow. They become involved, then they control it, then they divert it from its purpose and then it is taken over by a religious cabal... Officials say (to claimants) 'You have enough! You are recovered!'

A third claimed direct experience; 'Do you know what they told the Yezidi Survivors? 'Don't say the name of the man/men who raped you' so that you can get your compensation quickly''.

Evaluative perspectives on how the project meets the DAC criteria are:

- **RELEVANCE:** is the intervention doing the right things?

In this Iraq-based project, the severity of the genocide, enslavement and rape from which the project stems, and the fact that 'Conflict-related civilian deaths continue to average several hundred a year, including from ISIS remnants'⁷ leave little doubt of the project's relevance. In the course of this research, a degree of fear was expressed by KIs, reflected in some requesting anonymity and/or secure communication channels.

Anonymous KIs from the NORAD project asserted that 'in the Arab world, you need to have an official paper from the Ministries to be in contact with minority families. If you contact them on your own, you will get punished. It is terrifying for us.'

We conclude that Freedom of religion or belief is absolutely a relevant pursuit, both globally and in Iraq. This is conceptually true, and also within governance norms; FoRB is guaranteed by article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. MRG's overall coordinator for the NORAD project commented that the right to FoRB is in decline and hate speech is up. Regionally, and withIn the NORAD



ISIS munitions factory. Photo by: Mark Lattimer.

⁷ Ceasefire Operational Report, March 21, 2024

programme, within which this Ceasefire project fits. In addition, evidence from different KIs and factual evidence support the relevance of the project.

- **COHERENCE** how well does the intervention fit?

We regard the backbone of Ceasefire's programme in Iraq to be the reporting platform. We feel that this provides a useful, sustainable action onto which the legislative, compensation and training work fit naturally.

The project is closely aligned with Ceasefire's mandate. Ceasefire's [website](#) declares that 'Civilians are often recognized as the principal victims of war but rarely as the holders of rights.' Somaya Selim, a supporter of Minority Rights Group from the NORAD programme, expounded, 'In international law and... official statements, it is declared that civilians are the main victims of any war but... the state (does) not (always) treat civilians, especially the weak... marginalised groups... women and children, as victims (should be treated)'. Ceasefire's modus operandi involves civilian reporting, 'giving a voice', and the respect with which KIs feel they are treated points to both stylistic coherence, and a counter to societal marginalisation of minorities.

- **EFFECTIVENESS** is the intervention achieving its objectives?

Great advances have been demonstrated towards the project's main objectives, including civil society capacity-building, securing reparations for civilian harm, and advancing new civilian protection legislation. The project's purpose is, 'To strengthen legal protection for civilians in Iraq and to promote reparation for violations of civilian rights'. Protection has indubitably been provided by 'the Yezidi Survivors Law', and Ceasefire has a long trail of publications shared with the Iraqi Parliament, UN bodies, the public etc which promote reparation.

Some project indicators have been surpassed, as above, and nearly all have been met. The detailed section on the Results Matrix under Literature Search, above, points to an overall effective intervention. Full impact assessment will only be possible in the longer-term, particularly on reparations, because the Iraqi justice system is universally regarded as slow. Other areas, such as capacity building and further legislation, also require significant timescales. A longitudinal evaluation of Ceasefire's Iraq programme may be useful in measuring long-term impact.

- **EFFICIENCY** how well are resources being used?

We conclude that the project provides value for money; we have claims from participants and staff that more activity was undertaken than required. In particular, the caseload of the compensation service far surpassed targets and suggested 'value-for-money, and the daily contact was seen to be impressive. Ceasefire's financial report against budget for January 2022 – March 2024 has been submitted to the donor. The project agreement has been largely honoured within budget.

- **IMPACT** what difference does the intervention make?

The project is for four years, and its main results – capacity, legislation and influence – take much longer to emerge. A longitudinal evaluation is recommended. The fact that the project's indicators have been almost totally surpassed or met points to significant future impact. KIs pointed to concrete changes in the Yezidi Survivors' Law and their own capacity as evidence of an impactful intervention.

- **SUSTAINABILITY** will the benefits last?

As is often the case in Human Rights work, both the low level of available funding and its truncated nature remain a problem. Swiss funding was greatly appreciated by Key Informants. We conclude that motivation of Ceasefire staff and participants was high for the project, but we note the comment of Khaled Zaza: I am often saying 'I don't want you to do it for free... we need to wait until there is funding'.

Another challenge to overcome is the long road to having Ceasefire registered in Iraq, positive progress has been made, which should remove both a security issue and save time.

Elements of sustainability were also found in the continued activity of journalists trained under the programme in the Kurdish areas and in Baghdad.

We conclude that if donors prioritise human rights work, the project's approach, its ability to effectively target activists and its use of appropriate partners is likely to lead to sustained impact.

Overall Conclusions

- Services appear to have been delivered by Ceasefire on all five areas as per the agreement with the Swiss Government, free of charge, with good communication and professionalism. The DAC criteria appear to have been met.
- Ceasefire staff and Consultant appear highly committed and effective.
- The Results Matrix shows Ceasefire's prolonged dedication to achieving agreed results and success, particularly where the results are largely within Ceasefire's own scope.
- The evaluators agree with KIIs' comment that economically poor women had been accurately targeted.
- Limitations were felt by the 'smallness' of the Small grants for which the total is around \$40,000 per year. Nonetheless, genuine significant and sustainable impact had been made by strong recruitment and persistence.
- The evaluators agree with KIIs and participants ('beneficiaries') called for further donor funding of the programme.
- (Mostly Yezidi) children born of rape during the ISIS-Iraqi Government conflict of the early 2020s must still be registered as Muslims or else they will be deprived of education, health or other social care. This is a doleful burden carried by those children, their parents and Yezidi society. It is an ongoing injustice which merits further advocacy, and a solution on the part of the Iraqi Government.

Conclusions on the Ceasefire programme working from the Mosul Office in Iraq

- Links between Ceasefire in Mosul and Ceasefire internationally appear good, aided by a Norway-based Consultant, Khaled Zaza, who visits Iraq regularly.

- The programme has reached out to impressive numbers of participants and has a growing reputation in Mosul.
- Much remains to be done, particularly outside of Mosul in Nineveh Governorate, which is the second largest of Iraq. This training may extend beyond conflict areas.
- The reporting [platform](#) is clear, detailed and has allowed civilians, activists and others to publicly post over 3,800 assertions of human rights abuses in Iraq. Khidher Domie, who worked on facilitating the platform for three years found it to be an ‘excellent’ tool which gives agency and voice to normal Iraqis witnessing abuse, particularly in the ex-ISIS controlled areas. This is potentially a key sustainable centre of the Ceasefire programme, and we find it essential to protect it at all costs.
- There are multiple, serious obstacles to participants receiving payouts from the Iraqi Government. Ceasefire’s call for the process to be largely situated outside the (slow and bureaucratic) judiciary appears to be vindicated. The focus appears, correctly in our view, to remain on gaining the trust of participants and to maximising help in what can be a difficult and long pursuit for compensation.
- The Consultant Khaled Zaza sees some potential for redress in the USA for those suffering from US airstrikes. Whilst we cannot judge the potential for this, it seems a smart move to research this option and follow if it seems it may bear fruit.
- Ceasefire’s (lightly-staffed) operation in Iraq appears to employ only one woman, Lawyer Zeinab Mahami.
- Ceasefire in Mosul is the only organisation providing a free legal service to those suffering from the consequences of the Iraq-ISIS conflict. Its role is wider than that of a women’s programme, and recruiting and retaining female staff can be a challenge in the country⁸. Participant (‘beneficiary’) women interviewed did not raise the majority male staffing of Ceasefire as an obstacle or problem, pointing out that when they visited the office it was staffed by one woman and one man. Nor did the female staff member or the male staff members regard it as an obstacle. Nonetheless, should future work major on women’s issues, Ceasefire might usefully consider its options in increasing the ratio of women to men involved in the programme’s management.

Conclusions on the Ceasefire programme working from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

- Some reports that human rights abuses continue in the Kurdish areas, although most reports documented on Ceasefire’s platform are from Baghdad, Basra and Mosul.
- Asuda’s training of activists appears to have been implemented smoothly, effectively and at ‘value for money’. Participants interviewed from the Ceasefire project and across the NORAD programme have expressed high levels of satisfaction with the building of their capacity.

⁸ Although it is possible, as proved by women-led organisations Nineveh Women’s Organization and the Al-Masala Organization

Across the Ceasefire project, 90 activists have been intensively trained and over 1,000 cases have now been documented on the online platform.

- Within the Swiss Presidency of the UN Security Council, in May 2023, Asuda's director Khanim Latif gave a briefing on a significant rise in VAW and on advocacy and the importance of women's participation in human rights work. We find this a clear demonstration of Ceasefire's ability to advocate on the issues at the highest political levels.



Conclusion on links between the Ceasefire work from Mosul and from the KRI

- ASUDA, the Ceasefire Mosul Office and the Consultant all had good links to, and understanding of, current and former Ceasefire HQ staff. But links between them were scant; the impression was of a wheel with spokes rather than a spider's web. ASUDA, the Ceasefire Mosul Office and the Consultant all expressed that there could be some improvement in this regard, to increase mutual understanding of the context and project direction.

Khanim Latif – Ceasefire partner Asuda addresses the UN Security Council on women's rights, May 2023.

Recommendations for future projects

It is recommended that efforts be made to secure funding to prolong and revitalise what has been a successful project. Resources could be used to spread and consolidate the success of reparations for the whole of Nineveh Province (the second largest in Iraq), of which the important city of Mosul forms a small part.

It is recommended that efforts are made to bring together key project stakeholders across the boundaries between Iraqi Federal Government and Kurdistan Regional Government. This has begun with introductory emails through this evaluation but can be extended.

It is recommended that a longitudinal evaluation of Ceasefire's Iraq programme be conducted to measure long-term impact.

It is recommended that Ceasefire continues to look at how it can support legislation in favour of (mostly Yezidi) children born of rape in the ISIS-Iraqi Government conflict, and their families and communities to enjoy protection and FoRB.

Appendix One: Key Informants:

Two anonymous female participants from the NORAD 2022 evaluation, plus Somaya Selim, Nada Tarek and Jian Badrakhan.

Five anonymous female beneficiaries of the Mosul Ceasefire project, via Lawyer Zeinab Mahami Ceasefire

Lawyer Zeinab Mahami Ceasefire

Khidher Domie, Yezidi and women's rights activist, Kurdish Autonomous region, Iraq

Arez Sediq, Deputy Director of the project's major partner, ASUDA, in Kurdish Autonomous region, Iraq

Khaled Zaza, Consultant operating for Ceasefire

Rami Maarawi, Ceasefire Programme Coordinator, MENA Region, Ceasefire

Mark Lattimer, CEO, Ceasefire

Miriam Puttick, formerly of Ceasefire

Various anonymous students from the MRG-NORAD programme

Various global anonymous informants

Appendix Two: Literature

Results matrix of the project: strengthening legal protection for civilians and promoting reparations for violations in Iraq, Ceasefire, March 2024

'Strengthening legal protection for civilians and promoting reparation for violations in Iraq' Operational report to Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, April 2024

Legislative Review of the Draft Yezidi Female Survivors Law: Ceasefire & IILR [2020]

The Yezidi Survivors' Law: A step towards reparations for the ISIS conflict: Ceasefire Briefing Paper 2021

Human Rights Watch webpage: April 14, 2023 'Iraq: Flawed Implementation of Yezidi Compensation Law <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/14/iraq-flawed-implementation-Yezidi-compensation-law> Recommendations for Implementing Regulations: Ceasefire and IHR [30 April 2021]

Prosecuting International Crimes in Iraq : Criminal Justice System, Legislative Options; Ceasefire April 2021

Enforced Disappearances Bill Review: Ceasefire and IILHR, June 2022

Parliamentary Briefing on Civilian Compensation; Ceasefire and IILHR March 2022

Legislative Review on Draft Laws on VAW: Ceasefire and IHR [December 2022]

Legislative Review on Draft Laws on VAW: Ceasefire and IIHR [December 2022]

Compensation Guide – Arabic

Feasibility Iraq Legal Support Framework (Final): Ceasefire [2020]: Access to Justice Project Framework, 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2024

War Waged in the Home: Rethinking conflict and gender-based violence in Iraq (ENGLISH version), published March 2024.

Legal Support Activities: Ceasefire [2022]

Mosul Office Annual Report: Ceasefire (2023)

‘They Are in Control’: The rise of paramilitary forces and the security of minorities in Iraq’s disputed territories: Myriam Puttick, Ceasefire (January 2022). [CF \(ceasefire.org\)](http://ceasefire.org)

‘Ethnoreligious minorities, which did not have armed groups protecting them, were particularly vulnerable to attack’

<http://ASUDA.krd/> Webpage of ASUDA: for Combating Violence Against Women

[\(30\) Khidher Domle | LinkedIn](#) LinkedIn account of Khidher Domle

[Head of Catholic Church in Iraq leaves Baghdad amid heightened tension with militia leader \(thenationalnews.com\)](http://thenationalnews.com)

Appendix Three: Generic guide questions to other KIs, amended to suit the individual interviewee

Your role and involvement?

How long at (name of organisation)?

Do you know... (various names eg Khaled Zaza, Miriam Puttick etc)? Met them? Where? etc

Partnerships – Is there only one Iraqi organisation (as named in the initial proposal), Why?

Targeted questions (often ‘Progress towards objectives’) on the five key result areas of Capacity; Reparations; Legislation; Information to and getting higher prioritisation from power-holders.

Your organisation and your part in the process from proposal to evaluation

Your organisation and your part in the process in forming the ‘Yezidi Survivors Law’

What do you think about Ceasefire arguing a broadening from Yezidi women (to also include boys, men, other perpetrators, other religious groups etc? ... Which specifics?)

What has been the result after the Law was passed. The April 2021 recommendations? The HRW report? Selection of clients on the scales of credibility of claims and vulnerability?

Legal support for reparations claims in Mosul, including caseload and whether targets for receipt of compensation are/could be useful or not.

Lawyers fees as part of case cost estimation (from \$1000 to \$500)

The reporting platform at <https://ceasefire-mena.ushahidi.io/map>

Staff turnover (if applicable)

How can I arrange interviews with women participants using Egyptian and/or Modern Standard Arabic? Additional Key Informants?

Can I use your name against quotes, checking back only if I feel something is controversial (or making controversial opinions anonymous)?

Many thanks.

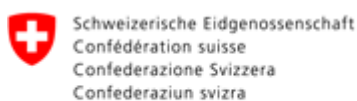
Appendix Four: Questionnaire of female beneficiaries administered by Ceasefire lawyer Zeinab

Introduction: 'Can you please answer six questions for me, to help an independent evaluation of Ceasefire's programme? Your answers might help Ceasefire, the Swiss Government and the evaluators to discover ways to provide the best possible service they can. Your words might appear in the evaluation next to your name, unless you specifically ask for your name or any particular words not to be used. Your answers will not affect in any way the services you receive as an individual in this programme. Are we ok to continue? Please ask for Name, Age.

1. How do you describe the service you are seeking from Ceasefire?
2. What other kinds of women-led organisations are there in your locality; what kinds of service do they provide and are they led by women?
3. If you did not use Ceasefire, how much do you think you would have to pay privately in lawyers fees to give you any chance of success on compensation?
4. What concrete improvement has Ceasefire support given you already in your life, and what concrete improvement do you think would be a realistic future expectation?
5. This Ceasefire programme on reparations is mostly a support for women. Most of the staff in the Mosul Office are men. Do you think this is relevant or irrelevant, important or unimportant? And if relevant or important, what change do you think it requires?
6. From what you can see, do you think Ceasefire's service is value for money for the Swiss and other governments who fund it?

(ends)

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