

Yazidi campaigner Nadia Murad wins joint 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

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Nadia Murad, a Yazidi human rights activist and survivor of sexual slavery by Islamic State in Iraq, won the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday (October 5) jointly with Denis Mukwege, a gynaecologist treating victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said it had awarded them the prize for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a 25-year-old Iraqi woman of the Yazidi faith escaped Islamic State sex slavery after three months of captivity and has been advocating for the end of human trafficking ever since.

She was abducted from Kocho near Sinjar, an area home to about 400,000 Yazidis, and held by Islamic State in Mosul where she was repeatedly tortured and raped. She escaped three months later, reaching a refugee camp, then making her way to Germany.

Islamic State militants consider the Yazidis to be devil-worshippers. The Yazidi faith has elements of Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam. Most of the Yazidi population, numbering around half a million, remain displaced in camps inside the autonomous entity in Iraq's north known as Kurdistan.

After escaping in 2014, Taha described her experience of torture and rape at the United Nations in December 2015 and pleaded to the 15-member Security Council to wipe out the militant group.

At least 9,900 of Iraq's Yazidis were killed or kidnapped in days following Islamic State attack in 2014, according to the first study which aimed to document the number of Yazidis affected. The study could be used as evidence in trial over IS for the crimes of genocide.

About 3,100 Yazidis were killed - with more than half shot, beheaded or burned alive - and about 6,800 kidnapped to become sex slaves or fighters, according to the report published in the Public Library of Science journal PLoS Medicine in May.

In August 2014, Islamic State militants launched an assault on the Yazidi religious community's heartland in Sinjar, northern Iraq.

Murad and her attorney Amal Clooney appeared at a United Nations event in March 2017 to appeal for that the crimes of Islamic State militants to be investigated and perpetrators prosecuted. She criticized the international body for inaction.

In September 2016 Murad was appointed the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking. She received the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought along with Lamiya Aji Bashar, another Yazidi woman, in December 2016.

The Nobel peace Prize, worth 10 million Swedish crowns (\$ 1.4 million), will be presented in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, who founded the awards in his 1895 will.