



## YOUTH FOR EZIDI EDUCATIONAL PACK



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The Youth for Ezidi Educational Package (YEEP) is designed for secondary school teachers interested in the **culture, religion, heritage, migration, and human rights** of Ezidi people.

This educational pack can be used for:

- Key Stages 3 (KS3), Years 7-9 (ages 11-14)
- Key Stage 4 (KS4), Years 10-11 (ages 14-16)
- Key Stage 5 (KS5), Years 12-13 (ages 16+)

YEEP can be used to enhance learning in the following sectors:

- Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE)
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development
- Religious Education (RE)
- Geography
- Politics
- Sociology

The aim is to engage pupils in **minority religious cultures**, the status of **girls and women, displaced people and refugees**, and **genocide**. It is also to provide opportunities to appreciate, understand and use or act on principles to do with **human rights**.

Given YEEP's focus on girls and women from ethnic minority backgrounds, the education pack can be utilized to inform school activities such as **International Women's Day** in March and **Black History** Month in October and other social and cultural events and activities.

YEEP includes an Educator's Guide with details on the community and the 2014 genocide, photographs, and a filmed drama, MABRUKA'S LAMENT to inform 20-minute lesson-building blocks. The play is written by Marc Littman and produced by Sohaya Visions and Mukul and Ghetto Tigers as part of RAFTA – Rise Against Fanaticism Through the Arts [www.sohayavisions.com/mabrukaslament](http://www.sohayavisions.com/mabrukaslament)

Anyone who works with youth can use these materials to creatively and engagingly raise awareness about the Ezidi people, their religion and culture, their status as genocide survivors and displaced individuals, and the implications for refugee and human rights in a creative and engaging manner that can both educate and excite pupils.



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**Section A provides background to the main topics while Section B focuses on the filmed drama, MABRUKA'S LAMENT, that can be viewed in its entirety (one hour) or as short 3–6-minute clips to inform questions and exercises for all pupils in 20-minute lesson-building blocks.**

**Specific sections are highlighted in green for KS3 pupils.**

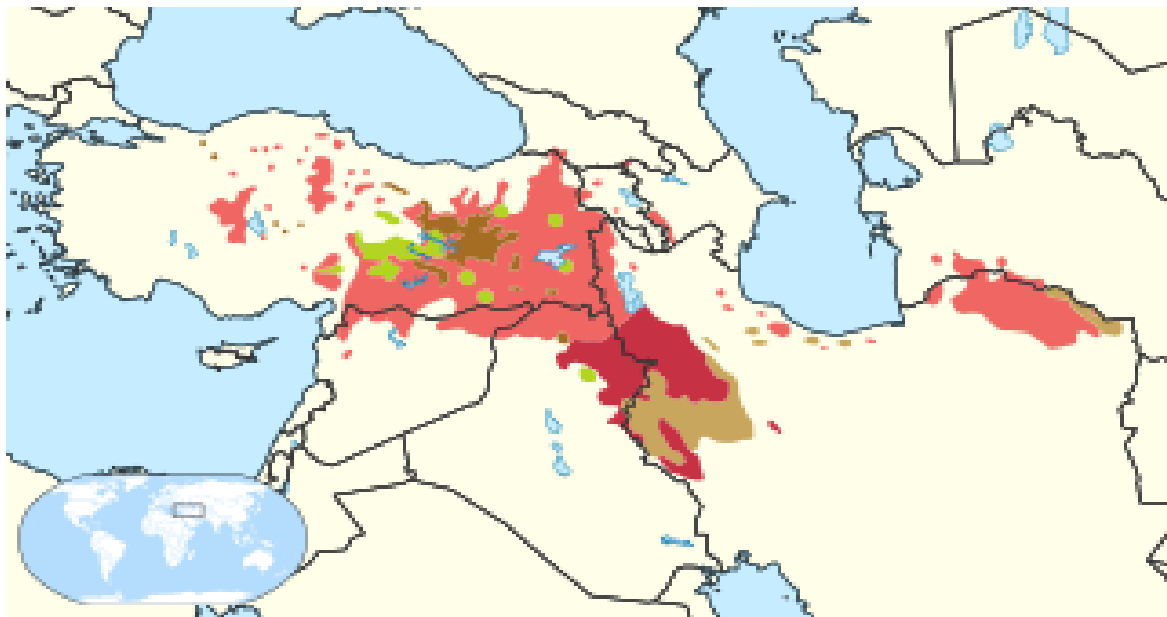
**Others are highlighted in yellow for KS4 and KS5 pupils.**

## A. EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### 1. Who are the Ezidi?

The Ezidi are an ethno-religious group from Sinjar and Kurdistan, spread across northern Iraq, Syria, and Iran, as well as southern Turkey, extending into Armenia and Georgia. Sinjar (known as Shingal in the Kurdish language) can refer to the mountain, the district, and the main city in the region. Being ethno-religious means that their religion is deeply intertwined with their ethnicity, making it inseparable from their identity. In other words, one can only be Ezidi if both parents are Ezidi.

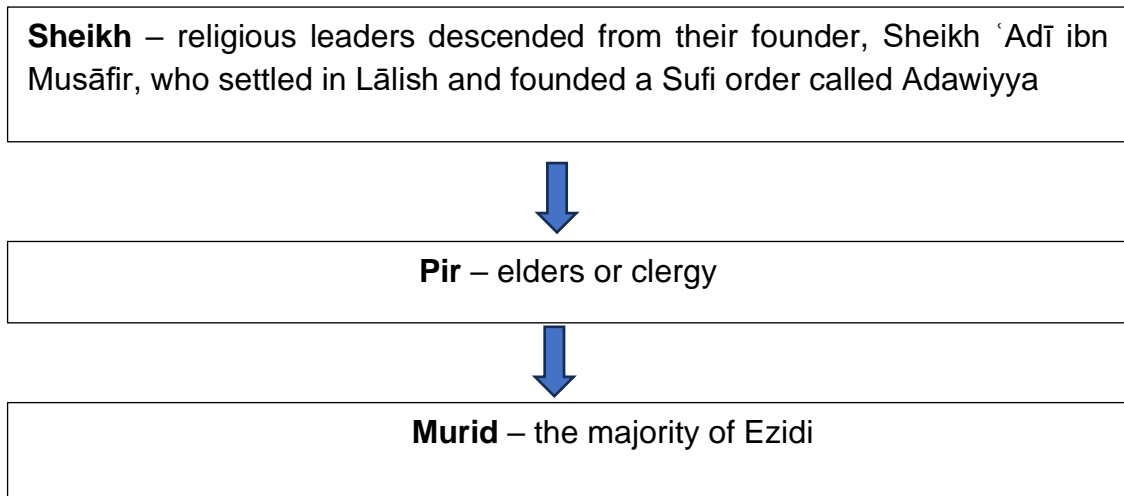
Ezidi is also spelt Yezidi or Yazidi and is an Arabic form of the Kurdish Êzdî or Êzdî. The term derives from Khuday Ez Dam, meaning '*I was created by God*'. Their main language is Kurmanji, which is a dialect of Kurdish. In certain places, such as in Armenia and Germany, their language has also come to be called Ezidi.



Geographic distribution of the Kurmanji language (Northern Kurdish) spoken by Ezidi people

There is an uncertainty about the remaining population number of the Ezidi people, especially since the Ezidi genocide in August 2014, but it is estimated that globally there could be around 800,000 to 1,000,000 persons belonging to the Ezidi community.

Conventionally, Ezidi **society** is structured by three main castes with a prince or emir as the secular head in the following hierarchy:



Social convention decrees that Ezidi do not marry across these castes, nor outside their group (**endogamy**). They also adhere to several **taboos** including avoiding certain foods and blue for their clothing.

Traditionally, most individuals from the Ezidi community who are not of higher caste (Sheikhs) have not been able to read or write. This may be due to the desire to keep religious knowledge secret and/or to avoid sending their children to Islamic schools in the region. However, in migrant contexts, especially since the 1950s, many Ezidis have learned to read and write while studying new languages.



Ezidi women and men

## 2. Ezidi religion

Ezidism is an ancient religious philosophy that has been influenced by Judaism, (Nestorian) Christianity and Islam (Sufism). While Ezidi devotees respect the Bible and the Qur'an (Koran), there is no central book, and the Ezidi religion is mainly practiced orally. The community tends to be conventional when it comes to religious and social

practices (**orthopraxy**), rather than believing in a firm theology (**orthodoxy**). One distinctive belief is that Ezidi were descended from Adam, but not from Eve.

Ezidi people believe in life after death, **reincarnation**, rather than a belief in heaven and hell. They are **monotheistic**, revering one supreme God, Yasdan, sometimes referred to with different names such as Xwedê, and Allah. But they also worship divine beings in the form of seven angels who come down to earth to support devotees.

Tawûsî Melek, also known as the 'Peacock Angel', is the most powerful angel and has the responsibility to fulfil God's will on earth where they can also take on the human form, Khass. Jesus, for instance, is one example of a Khass. The Tawûsî Melek is one of the most well-known and distinct symbols of the Ezidi faith.



Tawûsî Melek



Statue on Sharfadin Temple in Sinjar, Iraq

Ezidi see the **sun** as a powerful symbol, which refers to God's creative powers. They hold that all Kurds were Ezidi before the emergence of Islam in the eighth century. As a clearly marked worldview, Ezidism came to prominence in the twelfth century under the leadership of Sheikh 'Adî.

Ezidi **religious festivals** include the New Year in April. Known as Sere Sal, it means 'Head of the Year'. They celebrate by colouring eggs to mark the beginning of spring and the new cycle of life and rebirth.

**Jamiyya** is the Feast of Assembly and comes with a **pilgrimage** to Lalish where Sheikh 'Adî is buried in a valley surrounded by trees and greenery in Nineveh Governorate (northern Iraq). The Lalish Temple has a group of unique conical domes on circular bases representing the earth, all of which receive the sun's rays. Ezidis describe the place as Mekka Rakka, meaning the home of the sun. The site harbours Seljuk art from the Turco-Persian Sunni Muslim period (11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century) as well as symbols such as the eye of the sun, open rings, and others to do with the ancient Mithraic religion in a blend of Mesopotamian and Persian cultures.





Ezidi New Year at Lalish in Dohuk Governorate



Iraqi Kurdistan Ezidi temple



Women's Temple Xatûna Fexra



Woman at Wishing tree, Sinjar

### 3. Crimes against humanity

Throughout their history, Ezidi have been persecuted because they were not seen as a group who venerated a central holy book. Ezidi have also been wrongly accused of being '*devil worshippers*'. There is a story where Tawûsî Melek was asked to bow to Adam, the first man on earth, but the angel refused saying that it would only bow to God. This myth resembles the one about Lucifer (Satan) who also refused to bow to God but according to Christians and Muslims, this angel was punished and was not to be worshipped. Ezidis in fact means '*worshippers of God*'.

The most recent persecution, beginning in August 2014, was declared a **genocide** by the United Nations in 2016 and several governments, including the UK, in 2023. **Daesh** (also known as Islamic State, IS, ISIL or ISIS) occupied the regions in which the Ezidis lived and discriminated against Ezidi as they were not seen as 'people of the book' according to the Sunni Islamic interpretation of **ji**had in Sharia Law. Jihad refers to a spiritual struggle against evil within oneself or a struggle against the enemies of Islam. Depending on their age and gender, many Ezidis were executed, forcibly converted, enslaved, or indoctrinated to be fighters for Daesh. Some resisted and managed to escape.

Many Ezidi people now reside in **internally displaced persons** (IDP) camps in the Iraq and Kurdistan regions. Other Ezidi people are overseas with about 200,000 people living in Germany, about 50,000 in other European countries including the UK, around 12,000 in USA and Canada, and approximately 3,000 in Australia. Many others continue to cross borders to seek haven and reunification with families.

Over 2,700 Ezidi women and children remain missing. If alive, they continue to be enslaved and subjected to a litany of abuses.



Defend International provided humanitarian aid to Ezidi refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan in December 2014



Young women in an IDP camp engaged in artistic work at the IOM Mental health and Psychosocial Support Centre. Source: <https://iraq.iom.int/stories/young-girls-paint-hope-idp-camp-art-workshop>



## For KS4 and KS5: What is a genocide?

Genocide is often seen as the '**crime amongst crimes**'. It is not an isolated event but a systematic process of demeaning and dehumanising a group of people - due to prejudicial views about their ethnicity, nationality, race, or religion. Genocide occurs when there are attempts and actions to eliminate a group in whole or in part. As a crime against humanity, the term crystalised with the post-World War II Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide (1948). Also known as the Genocide Convention, it lists five determining features of a genocide under Article 2:

- (a) killing members of the group;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Crucially, the Convention enables any state to act against another - be they a state or other actors - if there are signs of genocide in their region under the principle of **universal jurisdiction** - that is, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator or victim, and even if the incidents took place elsewhere, courts could prosecute for genocide. This principle is important to prevent genocides from occurring, hold accountable those responsible for atrocities, provide justice to victims, deter future crimes, and hamper human rights abusers seeking haven in other countries.

Note that genocide need not involve any military conflict or even killings if there is a **systematic attempt, conspiracy, incitement, planning and/or propaganda** against an identified group to eradicate it in part or in its entirety. The emphasis is on the **intent** to destroy a group. Widely declared genocides include the Holocaust against Jews and others after which the Convention was formalised, Armenians in the early twentieth century, Tutsi in Rwanda 1994, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia.

Any nation-state signed up to the Genocide Convention has a duty to prevent and punish perpetrators of genocide. This means, if a genocide is identified and acted upon early, massacres and other violations can indeed be prevented.

However, in many cases, those nation-states that were contracted parties to the Genocide Convention did not act early enough to prevent atrocities, and even when recognised as a genocide, the duty to punish perpetrators has been slow and protracted.

#### 4. Prominent Ezidi people across the globe

- Guram Adzhoyev, former footballer
- Jangir Agha, national hero
- Misha Aloyan, boxer
- Roman Amoyan, Greco-Roman wrestler and Olympian
- Ibrahim Khalil, Ezidi folk singer and songwriter
- Dalal Khario, Women's Rights Award recipient, former captive of Daesh
- Meyan Khatun, Ezidi princess
- Zara Mgoyan, pop singer, actress and social activist
- Nadia Murad, poet, human rights activist, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient
- Emerîkê Serdar, journalist, writer, and translator
- Arab Shamilov, novelist



Nadia Murad



Roman Amoyan



Art projects to support displaced Ezidi people, *The Art of Survival*, Healing Arts with Yazda, Community Jameel, Culturrunners, Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, World Health Organisation, 2022. Source: <https://blog.google/outreach-initiatives/arts-culture/the-art-of-survival-a-yazidi-cultural-archive/>

## B. ENGAGING WITH FILMED DRAMA, MABRUKA'S LAMENT

### 1. Introductory activities

Before showing the film clips from the theatre play, build in time to find out the background to Ezidi history and culture so that pupils have a wider context to the story using the content of Section A. Set up exercises that gets pupils to explore their preconceived ideas. Then return to them after the film discussions.

#### KS3: Continuum line

(15 mins)

Create an imaginary line across the classroom.

Label one end with *Strongly agree*, and the other with, *Strongly disagree*.

Read out some statements (see examples below).

Ask pupils to place themselves on the line depending on the strength of their views.

Ask a few pupils to explain reasons for their positioning.

After viewing the film, do the continuum line activity again with the same statements to see if pupils place themselves differently or give different reasons for their placings.

#### KS3: Corners

(15 mins)

Place a different statement in each corner of the classroom.

Ask pupils to move to the statement with which they most agree - if they are unsure, they can remain in the middle of the room.

Ask pupils in different corners to share their reasons for their choice.

Give everyone the opportunity to change positions or join a corner if they are undecided.

#### Examples of statements

Ezidi people have very different ideas/worldviews to my own.

Ezidi people live a very different life to mine.

Ezidi youth should be able to marry whoever they want.

Ezidi girls and women should be allowed their independence to act according to their own will and ambitions.

Everyone should be allowed to come to the UK if they are escaping from war, famine or persecution based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, or nationality.

No refugee should be allowed to come to the UK.

Only particular refugees should be allowed to come to the UK.

All refugee children should be allowed to come to the UK.

No refugee children should stay in the UK without a parent.

Refugees should be able to ask their families to join them even if they are in another country.

Only refugees who come from certain countries should be allowed to stay in the UK.

I should be allowed to enter and stay in another country if I had to leave the UK because of war or persecution.

Anyone can become a refugee.

## **2. Summary of the drama**

MABRUKA'S LAMENT tells the story of a seventeen-year-old Ezidi girl, Mabruka. The two-act play begins at a time after the downfall of Iraq's prime minister Saddam Hussain in 2003 and ends around the time of the Ezidi genocide in 2014.

Mabruka lives a sheltered life, but she is headstrong and wants to know more about the world, even become an engineer. But she has limited education, and her parents have other ideas for her, bound to Ezidi traditions of only marrying within the community. Meanwhile, Mabruka meets a mysterious man called Yosef who seems to know a lot about her. Despite her better instincts, she becomes interested in Yosef who tells her about all the places he has visited, but hardly anything about himself. The film is of Act 1 leading up to the 2014 genocide, and the genocide itself is revealed in Act II which is not covered in the filmed drama.

## Cast of characters

Mabruka:	A sheltered Ezidi girl who lives in a village near Mosul in Northern Iraq, aged 17.
Yosef:	A Sunni Muslim man who grew up near Mabruka but now is a citizen of the world, aged 28.
Sami:	Mabruka's cousin and would-be suitor, a religious zealot, 36. He's the village's new mukhtar (head of local government).
Nadima:	Mabruka's mother, 37.
Zahra:	Mabruka's sister, 15.



Scenes from the theatre play, MABRUKA'S LAMENT

## 3. Discussion and activities

The short film clips are arranged sequentially to convey the main characters, story, and themes. They can be selected according to aims and interests. For further background, the one-hour film of the first act of MABRUKA'S LAMENT is available here: [https://youtu.be/HKQIz\\_gdcto](https://youtu.be/HKQIz_gdcto)

Here are some ways to structure discussion to develop further opportunities for understanding. Next to each film clip are questions to raise specific to the content. Challenge any negative or prejudicial views if they arise.

Note that the script excerpts for the film clips are in the Appendix.



#### 4. Questions to raise

##### Film Clip 1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= goKRyEdJGU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goKRyEdJGU)

(approx. 4 mins, 13.43-17.32 in film)

*Scene 3: Mabruka with her cousin and the village head, Sami – the film clip raises topics to do with Ezidi **religion**, **historical persecution**, and **social conventions**.*

1. Why do you think Sami says, 'It's not easy **being Ezidi**'?
2. Why does Sami say that 'The **Sunnis** are the greatest threat to our existence'?
3. What has influenced the growth of the Ezidi **religion**?
4. Why do you think Ezidi convention dictated that **marriage** should be among their own people and not with anyone outside the Ezidi community?

##### Film Clip 2 <https://youtu.be/2MymFdm5hVk>

(approx. 3 mins, 18.21 to 21.17 in film)

*Scene 4: Mabruka with a stranger called Yosef – the film clip raises topics to do with **religious penance**, **men and women**, **ambitions**, and **prejudices**.*

1. Why is Mabruka brushing the **tomb**? Whose tomb do you think it belongs to?
2. What could be the consequences of 'smearing a whole **race**'?
3. Why are Ezidi demeaned as '**devil worshippers**'?
4. Why does Mabruka feel as she does about **men**?
5. What is stopping her from following her **ambitions**? Why must she keep away from Yosef?

##### Film Clip 3 [https://youtu.be/lf-GEIJO\\_2M](https://youtu.be/lf-GEIJO_2M)

(approx. 6 mins, 22.28-28.13 in film)

*Scene 5: Mabruka with her mother, Nadima – the film raises topics to do with **patriarchy**, **education**, **arranged marriage**, and **love**.*

1. Why do you think Mabruka's mother says, 'It's not easy **being an Ezidi woman**'?
2. Why are girls not **educated** in traditional Ezidi settings?
3. Why do Mabruka's parents want her to **marry** Sami?
4. How does Mabruka's idea of **love** compare with her mother's idea of love?
5. Why does Mabruka's mother say, that we are 'stronger than our **men** but we can't tell them that'? Can you think of other settings where this situation might occur?

**Film Clip 4 [https://youtu.be/1p\\_66gfDZd4](https://youtu.be/1p_66gfDZd4)**

(approx. 6 mins, 30.12-36.10 in film)

*Scene 6: Mabruka meets Yosef again – the film raises topics to do with **education**, **poetry**, the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's **political regime** in Iraq, and **taboos**.*

1. Is it necessary to question **authority** to learn?
2. What does the story of *Mem and Zin*, by the **poet** Ahmad Khani compare with in the West? Why is it significant to the play?
3. What does Yosef mean by 'Since the fall of **Saddam**, there's a power vacuum'?
4. What are the reasons for why Ezidi cannot eat lettuce according to **tradition**? Which explanation do you find the most believable and why?
5. What does the **smartphone** represent for Mabruka?

**Film Clip 5 <https://youtu.be/JGGHC1fG5r8>**

(approx. 4 mins, 37.21 to 41.37 in film)

*Scene 7: Mabruka with her younger sister, Zahra – the film raises topics to do with ideas about **sin**, **iconic places**, **jihad**, learning and sharing through **technology**, and **globalisation**.*

1. What does Mabruka understand by the idea of **sin**? How does it compare with Sami's idea of sin?
2. Where is Badush, Atshan Mountains and the Tigris River on the **map**?
3. What do you think opening to the '**world at her fingertips**' through Siri might do to a person who has never had a smartphone before?
4. What might Mabruka be talking about when she says, 'The **currents** are bubbling to the surface'?
5. Why does Mabruka compare herself to Eve as in the **biblical tale** with Adam?
6. Why can't Mabruka tell anyone about the **smartphone**? Why do you think she shared it with her sister?

## **6. Alternative exercises for small group work**

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(20-30 mins each)

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### **1. Explore the role of Tawûsî Melek, the 'Peacock Angel', in Ezidi life**

- Look at pictures of Tawûsî Melek and research its significance.
- Conduct drawing and painting exercises inspired by these images.

### **2. Discover Ezidi religious practice and worldviews**

- Research Ezidi daily prayer practices and compare them with other known prayer traditions.
- Investigate Ezidi views on reincarnation and discuss how they differ from other religious beliefs about the afterlife.
- Pose questions about personal beliefs on reincarnation and reasons for them.

### **3. Research the creative contributions of Ezidi people**

- Explore Ezidi poetry, songs, music, artworks, and architecture through a project.
- Highlight the contributions of specific Ezidi individuals in areas such as sports, music, literature, and human rights.

### **4. Explore reasons for refugee status**

- Ask pupils to discuss and record reasons why people become refugees on a graffiti wall.
- Encourage pupils to add their own responses in different colours as their understanding deepens.
- Locate relevant countries on a map and discuss existing knowledge about their situations.
- Use gathered responses to compare 'what we knew then' to 'what we know now' for assessment purposes.

### **5. Explore reasons for seeking asylum**

- Explain reasons why people seek asylum, focusing on persecution and denial of basic rights based on gender, sexuality, race, religion, nationality, social group, or political beliefs.
- Prompt pupils to think of examples where similar situations occur elsewhere.

## 6. Imagine being forced to leave home

- Ask pupils to imagine being told they must leave their home overnight to go to a different country.
- Write about their feelings or list questions that they might have in such a scenario.

### Exercises for KS4 and KS5 for small group work

(20-30 mins each)

Find out about historical attacks against Ezidi people over the centuries. Reflect on inter-ethnic rivalries and why tensions emerge more generally.

Find out about what characterises a dowry – who practices it and why? Compare it with other marriage practices pupils may know.

Ask pupils to identify social structures and any other signs in which Ezidi people could be discriminated against for a genocide, and why?

Discuss the Genocide Convention and what it means for people around the world including declared genocides against the Ezidi, the Holocaust against Jews, gypsies and other groups in the 1940s, and the Rwanda case against Tutsi people in 1994. What can signatory nation-states do to prevent a genocide?

Discuss how refugees are defined in and protected by international law, and that seeking asylum is not a crime.

Consider the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and reasons why most countries in the world are signed up to it. You can look at some of the Articles (e.g. 28: right to education; 38: war and conflict; 9: separation from parents; 30: minority and indigenous groups) and Article 22, which requires governments to give aid and assistance to refugee children. [www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child](http://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child)

## 6. Creative activities to follow viewing

(20-30 mins each)

- 1 One theme in the play is the importance of **knowledge** and **hope**. Explore with pupils how Mabruka and her younger sister Zahra acquire knowledge and stay hopeful, despite the traditional pressures on them being Ezidi girls. What enables them to do that – friendship, creativity, dreams, community, books, technology etc.?
- 2 Ask pupils to choose a character featured in MABRUKA'S LAMENT and describe their **life in the future**: What do they think they will be doing? How might their lives be different if they had left their homes? Where can they migrate to? How can they benefit other countries as refugees?

Script excerpts in the Appendix from page 19 may be used by older pupils in groups where they assume characters, starting with the script excerpts to work out the main content, tensions, and possibilities.

- 3 Ask pupils what refugee children would need to help them feel welcomed and not isolated. Make a list of possibilities. Based on what they have seen and discussed, ask pupils to put together ideas for an Ezidi or a general **Refugee Welcome Pack** of things they could say or do, as individuals, a class or as a school community, to help a refugee arriving in their school.



## C. APPENDIX

### Five script excerpts to go with film clips in Section B

#### MABRUKA'S LAMENT

The playwright, Marc Littman, said:

*'I wrote MABRUKA'S LAMENT after hearing about an Ezidi honour killing of a young woman. It resonated with me because, as the son of a German Holocaust survivor, I'm deeply troubled by fanatics and their cruelty and inhumanity. I see my life's work as a writer and a human being to promote tolerance of all. That transcends the Ezidi's... There is room in this world for everyone. We can learn from each other.*

*As a former journalist, I did extensive research online and read numerous books about the Ezidi people and while I didn't interview them, I did watch numerous videos of them talking about their religion and way of life, which has similarities to the Jewish people who are, likewise, considered clannish, mistrusted and persecuted. I actually started writing my modern-day Romeo and Juliet play before the brutal ISIS genocide of the Ezidi people and then incorporated this ongoing tragedy into the play in hopes of spreading the word that thousands of Ezidi women and girls are still missing. Moreover, history repeats itself...and no one is safe unless we finally accept our differences.'*

#### FILM EXCERPT 1

##### Mabruka with her cousin and the village headman, Sami

###### Scene 3

SETTING: The next day. MABRUKA is alone on stage. Spotlight on her clutching a sacred book and softly praying. She turns toward audience.

###### MABRUKA

I was saying the afternoon Niveja evari, one of our five daily prayers, and facing the sun when Sami's wicked face blocked my light.

(Lights up on SAMI, dressed in holy robe with pockets and wearing a keffiyeh, an Arab headdress.)

###### SAMI

Let me ask you, Mabruka, if you were reincarnated, as we say, kiras guhorin, the changing of the garment, would you come back Ezidi?

###### MABRUKA

Ezidi is the only faith I know, Sami.

(Spotlight on MABRUKA revealing her inner thoughts to audience.)

###### MABRUKA

I hated when Sami would interrogate me and devour me with his hungry dark eyes. I tried not to look at him. He reminded me of an ape. Instead, I was the one caged as his student, a frequent object of his fury. I would've fought back, but my father insisted I be civil, especially, when Sami was a guest in our house, which was becoming all too frequent. My father couldn't say no. I think he feared Sami's religious fervor, a thin cover for his lust.

(SAMI smacks the Kiteba Cilwe, the  
holy Book of Revelation.)

SAMI

A diplomatic answer but not necessarily the right answer. You could charm my late father, Mabruka, the benevolent fool, but I'm now mukhtar. I must insist on a higher standard, especially from you.

(SAMI draws tender finger down  
MABRUKA's cheek, kisses her  
forehead then curls her hair  
around his stubby fingers and  
tugs. MABRUKA flinches in pain,  
pushes SAMI away.)

SAMI

Eve! You think you can tempt me?!

MABRUKA

I hate you!

SAMI

I know I'm not the only one you hate. But you're still a child and must learn the right path, Mabruka. It's not easy being Ezidi, isolated, bound by so many taboos designed to protect us from the forces of evil the universe has marshalled to test us. A beautiful girl could be tempted.

MABRUKA  
(Mumbling)

The testimony of my faith is One God, Sultan Sheikh Adi is my king, Sultan Yezid is my king, Tawûsî Melek is the object of my declaration and my faith...

SAMI  
(Grabbing Mabruka's arm)

Do you know what the word **extinction** means, Mabruka?

MABRUKA  
(Yanking arm free)

You're hurting me, Sami!

SAMI

Because you're hurting our people! As Ezidis we must remain pure or we will cease to be. We have suffered 74 genocides at the hands of Muslims and Christians. A thousand years of persecution and now Saddam's lawless thugs. The Sunnis are the greatest threat to our existence. Trust no Muslim!

MABRUKA

But can't we trace our origins to Islam? Don't we have much in common with Muslims, Christians, Jews and others? Is there not one God for all of us?

SAMI

We are different! We, alone, believe God has moved on and left Tawûsî Melek, the Peacock Angel, chief of God's seven holy beings, to rule the world in his stead. The Muslims and Christians have the audacity to call our Peacock Angel Satan. Have I not taught you anything?!

MABRUKA

You taught me fear.

## FILM EXCERPT 2

### Mabruka with a stranger called Yosef

#### Scene 4

SETTING: Next day. Lights up on MABRUKA scrubbing conical white tomb of Sami's father with a toothbrush, lye soap and bucket of water.)

#### MABRUKA

Ezidis don't really believe in evil but if we did, Sami would be its face. I drew comfort from the knowledge that the sins we sow in this life are harvested in the next. I fantasized about Sami being reincarnated as a woeful donkey (*brays hee-haw*), and then Yosef intruded on my fantasies. Wasn't he an ass, too?

Didn't he insult my people? Called us devil-worshippers? How can you smear a whole race? Men. They're all ignorant, especially, Ezidi men. I'm not a slave. I'm a human being, a proud woman. I have value beyond my ability to cook, clean and make babies. I should have a choice to live free. And if Sami and my father don't like it, too bad. What can they do? Banish me? Then I'd be free to live the life I choose. I could go to school, maybe become an engineer, dance...

(MABRUKA dances)

#### MABRUKA (Continued)

Instead, I'm doing penance while *contemplating* my sins. Well, I'm finished contemplating, Sami....

(MABRUKA flings toothbrush. A beat later it's tossed back. Again she fires only to be bombarded by a return volley of toothbrushes. YOSEF, carrying his rifle on his shoulder, approaches with a bucket of toothbrushes. He's brushing his teeth. MABRUKA is not amused. She peers around anxiously.)

#### MABRUKA

You promised to stay away.

#### YOSEF

That's like promising not to breathe, my dear Mabruka. Would you prefer I turn blue, the forbidden color?

(YOSEF lies down beside MABRUKA. She scoots away.)

#### YOSEF (Continued)

You can't live your life in fear, Mabruka.

(MABRUKA bolts to her feet and confronts YOSEF then turns her back on him.)

#### MABRUKA

I'm not afraid!

(YOSEF nimbly leaps up, pushes  
MABRUKA.)

YOSEF

Boo!

(MABRUKA jumps. YOSEF laughs.  
MABRUKA tries to slap him but he  
catches her hand and kisses it.)

YOSEF (Continued)

Delicate hands like yours aren't meant for scrubbing. It's a sin.



## FILM EXCERPT 3

### Mabruka with her mother, Nadima

#### Scene 5

MABRUKA (Continued)

I was thinking maybe I could study engineering in Germany.

NADIMA

Why not London, Paris or America?

MABRUKA

Or Canada? I like maple.

NADIMA

*(Furiously stirring)*

So I hear. The whole village knows about you and the Muslim boy.

MABRUKA

Nothing happened. I told Sami. It was over before it started.

NADIMA

*(Turning to Mabruka)*

Is it?!

MABRUKA

Yes.

*(NADIMA angrily chops vegetables.)*

NADIMA

You know we have no money for travel abroad let alone an education. All you need is here. You should have been grateful to learn how to read the prayers. You didn't take them to heart. Maybe because it was too full.

MABRUKA

Nothing happened.

NADIMA

*(Sprinkling seasonings)*

You've started taking an interest in your clothes. I caught you ironing them for the first time.

*(As NADIMA fusses with dinner, MABRUKA's words trip her.)*

MABRUKA

Haven't you ever been in love, Mother?

*(They lapse into awkward silence that MABRUKA finally breaks.)*

MABRUKA (Continued)

It wasn't what I expected. Of course, I wasn't expecting to fall in love, and maybe I haven't. I just know the attention of a man makes me feel warm inside. And he's good-looking. Mysterious. He invites me to open strange doors –

NADIMA

That must stay shut!



MABRUKA

But what if there's love inside?

NADIMA

There's no room for foolish love. Maybe over many years you learn to love a man. I was just 14 when my father arranged my marriage to Felekna. We were both of the Pir caste. His family provided a good dowry including this stove. He lets me speak my mind. In private. I got used to his snoring. I cover his mouth and make him breathe through his nose. He gave me you and your sister Zahra without too many tries. We have enough wood and kerosene to cook and keep the house warm. Enough food, clothes. And, above all, honor.

MABRUKA

But you never got to go to school or travel except for festivals.

NADIMA

You mean I am a kept woman?! As if I had a choice? How did you get to be so free, Daughter? I keep telling your father it's time he gave you away. Maybe then you'd grow up and free your heart for what's important. Sami has expressed interest. He's the village mukhtar and a holy man. You could do worse.

(MABRUKA touches bruised cheek.)

MABRUKA

Sami is the devil! He beats me!

(NADIMA stops stirring, grips  
MABRUKA's shoulders while peering  
around for spies.)

NADIMA

For your own good. Better Sami beats you than the Sunni swine! He's trying to protect you, Mabruka.

MABRUKA

*(Wresting herself free)*

And who will protect me from Sami? You? Father?

NADIMA

Careful! Perhaps I should do to your mouth what I do to your father's. Sami is powerful and a frequent guest in our house. If he chooses you –

MABRUKA

I don't choose him!

NADIMA

You don't get to choose! Nothing's settled, but your father and Sami have been talking -

(MABRUKA starts crying; NADIMA  
softens, wipes her tears.)

NADIMA

My girl, you don't think I wish a better life for you? It's not easy being an Ezidi woman.

MABRUKA

So I've been told.

NADIMA

But we survive. Ezidi women are strong. Stronger than our men but we can't tell them that.

MABRUKA

For fear they'd beat us?

NADIMA

Not at all. And, in their own way, they love us. Did you know at each New Year's festival, your father gives me a colored egg he made with a little gift inside? No, not egg yolk. Sometimes it's a pretty stone or maybe a poem on a piece of paper he reads to me. He didn't do these things at first. He learned. We learned.

MABRUKA

Sami can't learn. He's an ape.

NADIMA

*(Shushing Mabruka)*

Your words are weighted with stones. They'll drag you down to hell, Mabruka.



## FILM EXCERPT 4

### Mabruka meets Yosef again

#### Scene 6

SETTING: The following week. Lights up on MABRUKA tilling vegetable plot with a hoe.

MABRUKA  
(Muttering)

Tawûsî Melek, the Peacock Angel, have pity on your poor servant. I deserve better than this. My parents think I am headstrong for questioning authority, but isn't that how we learn? I mean no disrespect. I follow all the rules handed down by my ancestors without question though I don't understand why I can't eat lettuce. I am proud to be Ezidi, but are we not all equal descendants of Adam?

(MABRUKA is so preoccupied she doesn't see YOSEF approach.)

YOSEF

Adam was the first Muslim, the father of the human race.

(Startled, MABRUKA swings her hoe but YOSEF nimbly dodges it.)

YOSEF

Whoa, take it easy, girl.

MABRUKA

Go away! Haven't you caused me enough harm?!

YOSEF

That depends on how you define harm. I've had to be a bit more circumspect since I fired a shot and it nicked that pointy tomb. You'd think it was a declaration of war. I have eyes on me everywhere, strangers asking questions.

MABRUKA

Like how you lied about your uncle servicing my father's car.

YOSEF

You didn't deny taking a keen interest in a car's engine. I saw you staring at my motorcycle's two stroke engine and figured you had a mechanical bent so I improvised. No, my uncle didn't have an auto repair shop. He was a tailor. And this was my home. That's the truth. Sometimes I stretch it so much it tears. But I have my reasons.

MABRUKA

I don't care. I don't want to know anything about you. Not even your real name.

(YOSEF produces a book, *Mem and Zin*, and offers it to MABRUKA.)

YOSEF

I brought you a book, *Mem and Zin*, by the poet Ahmad Khani. Have you heard of it?

(MABRUKA resumes tilling.)

YOSEF (Continued)

They call it the Kurdish *Romeo and Juliet*. Khani wrote it in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Like Romeo and Juliet, it's the tale of lovers from different clans who meet a tragic end after their families deny their love. I thought you'd like to read it.

MABRUKA

Sami took away my books. He forbids me to read or learn. I have to work the field like a donkey.

(YOSEF brays like a jackass.  
MABRUKA casts stealth looks,  
shushes YOSEF.)

YOSEF

I thought you were fearless, Mabruka.

MABRUKA

I'm not stupid! Leave me alone! Go back to Canada or wherever you go.

YOSEF

Soon enough. Mosul is getting too hot for me. Since the fall of Saddam, there's a power vacuum. If one is not careful, one could get sucked into it.

MABRUKA

I have my own problems.

YOSEF

Easily solved. You want to continue learning, Mabruka? (*Yosef spins like a mystic Sufi dancer*) How about dancing? Would you like to dance with me? I will teach you.

MABRUKA

You've already taught me plenty. I'm not a dog. I don't need to be taught any tricks.

YOSEF

What if I provided a tutor to teach you, a secret tutor, and no charge?

(MABRUKA ignores YOSEF. He reaches into his back pocket for his Apple iPhone.)

YOSEF (Continued)

She'll teach you everything you wanted to know but was afraid to ask. Siri, why don't Ezidis eat lettuce?

(YOSEF holds up his cell phone  
so they can hear the answer.)

SIRI (Continued)

*The caliphs of the Ottoman Empire carried out many massacres against the Ezidis in the 18th and 19th centuries with thousands of them killed in the lettuce fields then dotting northeastern Iraq.*

*Watching the blood of innocents gush into the greens prompted a lasting aversion to the vegetable.*

YOSEF

Siri will teach you everything including English. You can see the news in America and England, listen to music, play games....

MABRUKA

How about the truth about why Ezidis don't eat lettuce? Yes, my people have long been persecuted, and the ban against lettuce dates back further than the Ottomans. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century a ruthless ruler near here ordered the execution of one of our saints. People pelted his corpse with heads of lettuce. Since then it's forbidden to eat lettuce.

YOSEF

You hear that, Siri? We stand corrected. Still, all the knowledge of the world – true or not -- is in this phone except what is not written down. And I give it to you, Mabruka, so you can live and learn.

(With a flourish, Yosef offers  
MABRUKA the phone but she turns  
her back.)

YOSEF (Continued)

Siri, play Somewhere over the Rainbow by the Hawaiian singer IZ.

(Siri plays the iconic song by IZ  
as he strums his ukulele.  
MABRUKA stops tilling to hear.)

MABRUKA

Beautiful. Haunting. But I don't understand the words.

YOSEF

Siri will teach you. She's patient. Always. Unless she gets confused. Then it's maddening.

MABRUKA

Like you.





## FILM EXCERPT 5

### Mabruka with her younger sister, Zahra

#### Scene 7

SETTING: Three weeks later. MABRUKA,  
alone, talks to audience.

MABRUKA

Had I sinned? You could argue I'm forbidden to even converse with strangers let alone accept gifts. But isn't it equally sinful not to grow the mind God blessed me with, to strive for knowledge I could share to bring about greater understanding and acceptance for my people? Siri opened up the world to me. Like a magic carpet she flew me far beyond the Badush and Atshan Mountains and the Tigris River to bathe in the English rain, sup along the Champs Elysees, ring the Liberty Bell, drink maple flavored coffee in Ottawa. I even stowed away on the Apollo spaceship and landed on the moon! Sami insists Ezidis are the center of the universe – more like he is -- but Sami's dumb. I know better. I even know now how a two stroke motorcycle engine works. It's amazing what you can learn on YouTube. Fashion, beauty secrets, recipes – I surprised my mother when I made lasagna, but she prefers her own cooking, maybe because I burned it. I was too busy with Siri.

(MABRUKA fondles iPhone.)

Everything you wanted to know but was afraid to ask is at your fingertips, especially, music. I listen to everything, pop, jazz, rock and roll, country, opera. Maria Callas singing Madame Butterfly (*Mabruka clutches her chest.*) Her voice makes my heart flutter. And, yes, I searched Shakespeare. Siri beckoned me to explore, to question my beliefs. The truth is I questioned everything. I discovered Twitter. So much desperation and hatred in my world. The currents are bubbling to the surface. Jihad. Islamic fervor. Should I warn the others? Would they listen to a young woman, even one as worldly as I? Would they mock me as Eve? Well, I don't regret taking a bite of the apple. But like Eve in the Garden of Eden, I couldn't wait to share....

(Lights up on MABRUKA and her  
sister. ZAHRA, laughing, is  
grabbing for the iPhone.)

ZAHRA

Come on, Mabruka. I need to check Nickie's latest tweets.

MABRUKA  
(*Relenting*)

You're obsessed with Nick Jonas, Zahra. I don't even like his music.

ZAHRA

Speak for yourself. Nickie's so cute. I'm in love. Are you in love, Mabruka?

MABRUKA

More like in hate.

ZAHRA

Then why are this boy's photos in your phone?

(Show photos of YOSEF on stage  
screen as Zahra holds up phone  
for MABRUKA.)

MABRUKA

I told you I found his phone. Now it's mine, and that's not a boy, he's a man.

ZAHRA

He's not as good-looking as Nick Jonas.

MABRUKA

He's attractive enough.

ZAHRA

He looks cocky.

MABRUKA

Confident.

ZAHRA

He has big lips.

MABRUKA

Broad shoulders.

ZAHRA

I bet he talks with a lisp.

MABRUKA

No he doesn't.

ZAHRA

Ah! So you know him.

(Mabruka grabs phone back.)

MABRUKA

You ask too many questions, Zahra.

ZAHRA

Maybe I already know the answers.

MABRUKA

I'm begging you, Zahra. This is a secret. You mustn't tell or Siri will never talk to you again.

ZAHRA

I won't tell...for a price.



## Useful resources

### For Religious Education

- Film on Ezidi religion [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF7X\\_N\\_r1Fo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF7X_N_r1Fo)
- Documentary, *Following the Peacock* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidis>
- Resources on Ezidi history and community <https://www.eurasiareview.com/15032022-who-are-the-yazidis-analysis/>
- Guide to the Ezidi religion including comparisons with Hinduism [www.yeziditruth.org](http://www.yeziditruth.org)
- Details on the Lalish Temple <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6467/>

### For Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE); and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development

- Book about Ezidi girl, Farida Khalaf, and her escape from Daesh enslavement, *The Girl who Escaped ISIS: Farida's Story* <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/437574/the-girl-who-escaped-isis-by-farida-khalaf/9781784702755>
- Nadia Murad and her initiative to transform her experiences of slavery into a humanitarian support for other girls and women <https://www.nadiainitiative.org/nadia-murad>
- Documentary with testimonials, digital and forensic evidence, geospatial data and drone footage, collected by United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/03/sinjar\\_urban\\_profile\\_-\\_english\\_3.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/03/sinjar_urban_profile_-_english_3.pdf)
- Details on the Ezidi situation in Iraq collated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a part of the United Nations <https://iraq.iom.int/stories/what-comes-after>
- Reports of the impact of the genocide on Ezidi including women and children by the Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights <https://jiyan.org/publications/>
- Report on Ezidi people ten years after the genocide by Voice of Ezidis and Refugee International [https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/humanitarian-pathways-and-ezidi-family-unification-in-europe-ten-years-after-genocide/?mkt\\_tok=NTcwLVZQRc05MjUAAAGTbbZI0c3\\_2Z3lwclqpMDy21cTvSLDx0gwzXdK8G-pN6w1ypN26g\\_BzYl-2u8z0XF2m4fureNKPz4fdYH\\_pyfl1coJf7Y4MPAiuMpyjaV](https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/humanitarian-pathways-and-ezidi-family-unification-in-europe-ten-years-after-genocide/?mkt_tok=NTcwLVZQRc05MjUAAAGTbbZI0c3_2Z3lwclqpMDy21cTvSLDx0gwzXdK8G-pN6w1ypN26g_BzYl-2u8z0XF2m4fureNKPz4fdYH_pyfl1coJf7Y4MPAiuMpyjaV)
- Teaching resources that can support or be linked to Ezidi as refugees and asylum-seekers by Oxfam's Stand With Refugees [www.oxfam.org.uk/education/classroom-resources/stand-refugees/](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/classroom-resources/stand-refugees/)
- Teaching resources for work with children and young people, including links to films, school speakers and classroom materials *Refugee Week* <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/take-part/children-and-young-people/>
- Resources focussed on the Holocaust in the 1940s and the impact on people's lives of more recent genocides for comparative exercises by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust [www.hmd.org.uk/resources/](http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/)

### Creative resources

Ezidi dances, festival, stories and music collated by the non-governmental organisation, Yazda, in Iraq [www.yazda.org/culture](http://www.yazda.org/culture) and [www.youtube.com/@yazda6461/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@yazda6461/videos)

Ezidi refugee's creative contributions in Germany since the genocide in book of poetry, *Daughters of the Sun* [www.toechter-der-sonne.de/das-buch.html](http://www.toechter-der-sonne.de/das-buch.html)

Ezidi modern poetry [www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2018/12/bar-codes-and-mass-graves-a-reading-by-seven-emerging-zd-poets](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2018/12/bar-codes-and-mass-graves-a-reading-by-seven-emerging-zd-poets) <https://allpoetry.com/poems/about/yazidis>

Virtual Reality experience and immersive exhibition in Germany (2021-2022) commemorating the Ezidi genocide [www.nobodys-listening.com](http://www.nobodys-listening.com)

Dengbêjî songs to relay stories including mourning those who were lost to battles and genocides. Documentary trailer, *Love in the Face of Genocide*, on Ezidi Dengbêj <https://jinhaagency.com/en/art-and-culture/love-in-the-face-of-genocide-documentary-exploring-oral-literature-of-yazidi-dengbej-in-shengal-14515> Kurdish resistance fighter and Dengbêj, Viyan Peyman [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms9TesGEq0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms9TesGEq0A)

For more information on Ezidi people, the 2014 genocide, and campaigns for justice, rehabilitation, educational and cultural support, see these Ezidi -led organisations' work:

- Women for Justice [www.womenforjustice.net](http://www.womenforjustice.net)
- Yazda [www.yazda.org](http://www.yazda.org)
- Hawar.help <https://www.hawar.help/en/>
- Voice of Ezidis [www.end-violence.org/members/voice-ezidis](http://www.end-violence.org/members/voice-ezidis)
- Wadi <https://wadi-online.org/supporting-and-advocating-for-refugees/>
- Farida Global Organisation <https://faridaglobal.org>
- Free Yezidi Foundation <https://freeyezidi.org>
- Sinjar Academy [www.sinjaracademy.org](http://www.sinjaracademy.org)
- House of Coexistence <https://hocsinjar.org>





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