

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to ask that the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security take action to resettle Yazidi survivors of the Islamic State's campaign of genocide and sexual violence in the Middle East. As reported in *The New York Times*, women who were recently reunited with their children are in need of refuge because they may be killed if they return home to Iraq.¹


Starting in 2014, the Islamic State singled out the Yazidi religious minority in the territories they controlled, killing the men and enslaving the women. Many were raped. After the women were liberated, they learned that their young children were at risk of being killed if they brought them back home to the Yazidi region of Northern Iraq. These women then faced the wrenching decision of whether to return home or remain with their children in halfway houses.

Former U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith has worked with Kurdish authorities and the White House to reunite some of the Yazidi women with their children after they had been separated. However, these families do not have a home to return to and the children may not be accepted by the Yazidi population and may be killed if they accompany their mothers to Northern Iraq.

The law provides for the United States to accept as refugees men and women who face serious harm if they return home, and there is a rigorous process in place to ensure their applications for refugee status are properly vetted. And when one nation grants refuge, others are encouraged to do the same. We should also work with countries in the region to encourage them to offer these women refuge. It is time for the United States to exercise its leadership on behalf of these women and children. We ask that you take action to find them a home.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/12/world/middleeast/yazidi-isis-slaves-children.html>