

I'll call her "Nada," not her real name. Nada is a Yazidi woman from Sinjar, Iraq, now age 31. On Aug. 3, 2014, ISIL came for her people. The Kurdish Peshmerga, tasked with protecting them, fled, leaving them helpless. Nada and her two children — a boy, eight months and a girl, two — were separated from her husband and father-in-law, whom she never saw again. The girls and women were taken to Mosul. As a married woman, Nada should not have been grouped with the girls, but she was. Their photographs were taken, overseen by an ISIL sex-slavery organizer (I'll call him X; as you'll learn, he remains newsworthy). They were taken to Raqqa in Syria, where Nada and her children were bought by an ISIL emir. For 10 days Nada was enjoyed by his soldiers. (--image--)

ISIL survivors Suham Haji, left, Samira Hasan, centre, and Saud Khalid sit in the Dohuk Girls and Women Treatment and Support Centre in Dohuk, Iraq, on Feb. 22, 2017. The three women were among 900 being treated at the centre after being kidnapped and sold multiple times by ISIL before escaping captivity.

Ryan Remiorz/CP

Then she was resold. In all she was passed around to 13 men, including X for some months. Her first owner eventually bought her back. She fell pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl, who was given to her owner's family. Nada was eventually made "wife" to an Iraqi fighter. He would put a gun to her head or mock "hang" her children to keep her submissive. He would constantly tell her, "You are an infidel," and "You are dirty." But all her captors said those things constantly, including their kinswomen. Nada and her children were forced to watch four men being beheaded (--image--)

At one gruesome point, Nada told me through an interpreter during our hour-long interview at an educational meeting on the Yazidi situation this past Sunday, Nada and her children were forced to watch four men being beheaded. Eventually, because Nada speaks fluent Arabic and could pass as Muslim, she was able to escape with her children and contact family members in Kurdistan, who paid for smugglers to take them there. Canada accepted Nada and her children, but not her father or sister. She has been living in London, Ont., for eight months. Recently, on a bus, she recognized X — the slave-market boss who had owned her and used her for months. They got off at the same stop. X saw her, covered his face and ran off. They got off at the same stop. X saw her, covered his face and ran off (--image--)

Nada went to the refugee centre and told them the man's real name and his ISIL name. The official there responded that she was too traumatized to be sure of what she saw. And then that person reportedly told her, "Don't tell anyone." But Nada, who doesn't need to be submissive any more, told me. I will be happy to share this man's identity with any immigration official who asks for it. Maybe he's the only ISIL member who slipped through Canada's vetting net, or maybe he's one of a hundred. Nada doesn't care, nor (at the moment) do I. She does not want to spend her life in Canada terrified she will cross his path again, nor should she have to. (--image--)

An Iraqi woman from the Yazidi community cries at her house, which was badly damaged by Islamic State fighters, during their occupation of Bashiqa, east of Mosul, Iraq, on Dec. 7, 2016.

Hadi Mizban/AP

In June, 2016, a United Nations report declared that the slaughter, sexual slavery and rounding up of Yazidis to "erase their identity" met the 1948 Convention on Genocide's criteria for genocide. In October of 2016, Canadian MPs unanimously supported a motion by Conservative MP and immigration critic Michelle Rempel to bring in an

unspecified number of Yazidi women and girls within 120 days. Following “much study,” our government agreed to bring more than a thousand “victims of ISIL,” including Yazidis, by the end of 2017. In mid-October, 2017, the government said it was “on track” to meet its target and had taken in about 800 ISIL survivors from Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey. By year’s end, 981 victims, 81 per cent of them Yazidi, arrived in Canada. Although the government is committed to taking those Yazidi already in process, “the (Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Canada) department will not be receiving any new applications under this initiative,” IRCC spokeswoman Faith St. John told CBC news. If choices must be made, our government should prioritize victims of genocide over refugees (--image--)

(--image--)

Why not? It is baffling to me that the gravity of the situation for this tiny people — perhaps a million in all — has failed to arouse the critical mass of support it deserves in its darkest hour. Along with the Assyrians and Kurds, the Yazidis are the Indigenous people of their ancient, sacred space in northern Iraq, with a culture reaching back 6,000 years.

Monotheistic, non-proselytizing, peaceful, with no history of enmity to others, they have endured 74 genocidal campaigns, including, in 1914-18 (alongside the Armenians) the loss of 350,000 members under the Turks. They risk extinction as a viable entity. Refugees deserve our sympathy, but displaced Muslims are surrounded by millions of religious brethren, and may someday, perhaps sooner than later, return to their homes. The Yazidi are now and for the foreseeable future a people in exile. If choices must be made, our government should prioritize victims of genocide over refugees. For more information on the Yazidi situation, visit [YezidiHumanRights.org/news.php](http://YezidiHumanRights.org/news.php). • Email:

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Robert Fulford: The brutalization of the Yazidi is the crime of our age, and shows ISIL for what it truly is  
Terry Glavin: Government’s inertia on helping Yazidis is shocking. It treats genocide like an inconvenience  
Happy endings: Yazidi boy held captive by ISIL reunited with mother in Winnipeg