Dear Friend,

On behalf of Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights, I am delighted to welcome you to our generous community of supporters and mental health and human rights advocates. Your support is invaluable in helping us to work towards our mission of ensuring access to mental health treatment and justice and protecting the human rights of all individuals in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Iraq, Syria and beyond.

These are trying times for people living in the region. Political infighting has led predictably to instability and inaction by local governments, and the international community’s focus has shifted to other parts of the world. Jiyan Foundation has remained steadfast in our duties, providing psychotherapy, medical, and legal support across nine regions.

Yet though our will remains strong, these global shifts and local uncertainty have affected our patients and our ability to reach more people in need of our services. During these two years, we have retained our staff by shifting to part-time work across all of our centers and simultaneously expanding our services to Baghdad, where our presence will provide us with more opportunities to realize our mission.

We have placed a particular focus on effecting incremental change through capacity-building programs and tactful decisions on directing the hand of justice to prioritize survivors.

The Trauma Clinic for Women and Healing Garden in Chamchamal highlighted in this report are both pioneer projects that stand as examples of what progress we can make with dedicated support.

I urge the international community and local stakeholders to re prioritize so that the needs of the people, especially those who have survived ISIS terrorism, genocide, and unescapable poverty, are met. It is in the international community’s interest to see a fully stable and democratic presence thrive in the Middle East.

This year we have made substantial progress on our newest pioneering endeavor, an International Institute for Traumatology and Mental Health in Kurdistan-Iraq. This project, though still in its early development, seeks to build on the talents of our local youth by leaning on the expertise of our international community. When realized, the institute will harness decades of Jiyan Foundation’s growth and act as a beacon for future generations looking for professional, accredited education in the region.

In the coming years, we plan to undertake several key initiatives to help us achieve our goals. We will focus on providing survivors of human rights violations with psychological services and legal aid and launching numerous campaigns to raise awareness of human rights issues in the region and beyond.

Our teams are also striving to broaden our reach by increasing our media presence and expanding our network of partners. We know that together we can achieve great things, and we are grateful for your support in helping us to make a positive impact.

Once again, thank you for your continued dedication to our cause. Your commitment makes it possible for us to have a lasting and meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve. We are thankful for your generous support and donations, which are integral in helping us continue our essential work.

Without your support, we could not provide psychological services reaching thousands of people every year or provide necessary legal aid and capacity-building programs that contribute to our ongoing mission. Your donations help us to make a real difference in the lives of Iraqis, Kurds, Syrians, and all other groups who have faced human rights abuses and senseless violence.

“\nIf we want to offer the best care to people, we all need to study, read, and confront our preconceived ideas, without fear or prejudices.\n”

Salah Ahmad
Founder and Chairman
Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights
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Spotlight
Welcome to our newest Treatment Center in Baghdad

“Mental Health programs account for less than 1% of charitable grants and institutional funding, however, it is these programs that provide direct, tangible impacts to security, economic development, and most importantly improved health and well-being of our fellow citizens.”

Salah Ahmad, at the opening ceremony, Baghdad

In July 2022, Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Iraq and with financial support from Johanniter and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), officially opened our new treatment center in Baghdad. The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the Iraqi government, nonprofit organizations, and representatives of several embassies. Like Jiyan Foundation’s other centers across the region, the treatment center in Baghdad provides free of charge psychotherapy and mental health treatment along with medical, legal, and social support to survivors of violence, trauma, and human rights violations.

Why Baghdad?

Baghdad is the capital of Iraq and home to 25% of the total population.

Baghdad is a culturally diverse city in the heart of Iraq. People living here have faced regular violent conflicts including terrorism, political violence, and high levels of religious extremism. The ramifications from these decades of violence have left lasting effects on people living here.

Through our newest treatment center in the heart of Baghdad our teams work to build a stronger, more peaceful, and resilient society.

At-A-Glance

In its first six months, our treatment center in Baghdad has:

Provided mental health, medical, legal and social support services to more than 500 clients in Baghdad at our center and through mobile teams.

Hosted 14 public mental health awareness seminars for the city’s residents and advocated on behalf of survivors in local media.

Employed and trained 29 local staff in all positions and continue to provide local capacity building seminars for our staff and external professionals.

Educated 181 children on their basic human rights, domestic violence and anti-bullying awareness, and methods of safeguarding their rights.
Sana's Story

"All religions call for love and peace; we need to emphasize both points in our country to build a peaceful society."

Her whole life Sana suffered violence and hate from prejudice and misconceptions about her Yazidi faith.

Sana was born in Sinjar, Iraq. She belongs to the Yazidi ethnic and religious community. In August 2014, when Sana was 15 years old, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attacked her city, killing hundreds of Yazidi and kidnapping others who would be forced into slavery and sex trafficking.

ISIS militants demanded the Yazidi convert to their distorted interpretation of Islam. Naturally, her community refused. Several of her family were murdered during this time.

Seeing first-hand how violence is born from ignorance, Sana sought an opportunity to combat the widespread public prejudices she had been living with.

In her journey, Sana discovered Jiyan Foundation’s Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue. Here, Sana found a safe place to speak freely about her experiences, realize her own prejudices, and learn about the perspectives of young people from different religions and backgrounds throughout the country. Through in-person meetings, workshops, and communal activities Sana joined other members in a mission to rebuild Sinjar with small community projects.

"All religions call for love and peace; we need to emphasize both points in our country to build a peaceful society," Sana said to her peers at an outing to visit religious sites in Nineveh Plains.

Sana now has friends from different religions and ethnicities throughout the region. She works with Muslims, Christians, Kaka’i, Shabak, and Zoroastrians in the Youth Network and leading common-ground initiatives in her local community, spreading messages of peace on behalf of her new friends to her own Yazidi community.

Our Programs

By means of our programs we promote the physical rehabilitation, psychological well-being and social reintegration of survivors of human rights violations and their family members. These programs are based on the idea that the rehabilitation of individuals, families, and communities is a crucial step towards building a peaceful civil society.

Program for Trauma Care & Health

Exposure to violence and human rights violations can lead to a variety of physical, psychological and social problems. We support survivors in Iraq and Syria by means of medical support, psychological treatment and specialized trauma care, as well as social work.

Program for Rights & Justice

The rule of law and respect for human rights form the foundation of democratic societies and are the blueprint for peaceful coexistence and prosperity. We offer legal assistance, litigation, collaboration with international human rights bodies, and advocacy for the rights of vulnerable groups. We also monitor closed institutions and disseminate human rights standards.

Program for Democracy & Civil Society

In order to progress towards a pluralistic civil society and to strengthen democracy in Iraq, we offer human rights education in schools. We also support networks of young activists and are involved in dialogue activities that bring together members of different ethnic and religious groups.

Program for Capacity Building

By investing in staff training and offering seminars for external professionals, we can better respond to the complex needs of the people we support. We have built up specialized expertise in mental health and psychotherapy. Our counselors and therapists have trained in various methods of clinical intervention, trauma therapy, and supervision.
Decades of war and traumatic events have produced a specific constellation of severe, persistent, emotionally and physically debilitating symptoms, particularly war-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and psychosomatic symptom disorder.

Today, there is overwhelming uncertainty about the future for people living in the region. This uncertainty contributes to feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and intense fear. As much as stress affects everyone, severe traumatic events, such as those experienced in the face of intolerable danger, tend to be overwhelming, shattering a person emotionally and leaving a feeling of total helplessness. In these instances, when a person is faced with a threat to their life, risk of injury, or a loss of security, the body’s usual coping mechanisms fail to alleviate suffering.

Jiyan Foundation’s flagship Program for Trauma Care & Health provides mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) at all of our centers across Kurdistan-Iraq, Iraq, and Syria. Jiyan Foundation provides these services free of charge to all people regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion, or other affiliations.

Jiyan Foundation is the region’s most effective, consistent, and well-known MHPSS service provider. Our local staff are trained with a special understanding of our patients’ unique ethnic, religious, and social beliefs, which ultimately creates trust between our staff and those seeking our services.

At Jiyan Foundation, we embody a holistic approach to mental health which includes medical and social programs alongside a community of support.

Revising clinical pathways

In the past two years, our teams have revised our internal infrastructure to better facilitate daily activities and streamline our services so that we can be more effective in our clinical duties. Through the development of more local program management staff, we can better facilitate clinical activities, assess our programs and provide self-care services for our staff. This focus on local team management allows us to be more flexible and respond more quickly to unexpected events that require an immediate response.

Working through crisis

Our staff is no stranger to crisis. In the past two years the global pandemic, ongoing economic crisis, and the shift in global focus away from the Middle East has caused severe strain on Jiyan Foundation’s resources. These instances have made the acquisition of medication, and the ability to provide services more difficult. In the last two years, we have had to reduce our clinical staff by 20% across all regions. At the same time, due to our success in combating stigma against mental health, we have seen a record number of requests for mental health treatment.

Culturally sensitive treatment

It is important that our own clinical staff reflect the diversity of our beneficiaries. In addition to hiring local staff that reflect the communities we serve, our teams consistently participate in cultural awareness trainings and seminars.

"I feel accomplished every time I provide sessions and notice positive results like this. In such situations, I feel satisfied that I entered this field of psychotherapy."

Psychotherapist, Jiyan Foundation Baghdad

Achievements 2021/22

- 4,986 individuals received mental health treatment
- 3,683 individuals received medical services
- 857 individuals received physical therapy treatment
- Revised and restructured our program’s clinical pathway process to facilitate the daily clinical work. Increasing the program management staff and facilitating the management and clinical activities throughout different projects.
- Opened a treatment center in Baghdad for Trauma Care and Health Program services.

In the next two years, our staff will continue to provide mental health services and support new patients at all of our treatment centers across the region. We will work intensively on reaching more people in rural areas to make our MHPSS services accessible to more people. In addition, we will work closely with Jiyan’s Program for Capacity Building to further develop competencies among the staff and maintain a standard of excellence in line with international guidelines and scientific evidence-based practices.

Our Program for Trauma Care & Health is also looking forward to continued support for staff care activities and well-being to ensure our staff have the resources they need for self-care. We expect this focus on self-care will in turn help us improve the quality of MHPSS and medical services we can provide.
Special Projects
The Trauma Clinic for Women

Providing Psychotherapy to Survivors of ISIS Trafficking in Kurdistan-Iraq

Each survivor has her own story to tell. Though these stories can be challenging to read, survivors like Sera*, whose story is shared below, volunteer to share their experiences in an effort to provide public awareness of their past and information to support pathways toward healing for others survivors.

*Indicates name has been changed to protect the identity of the survivor.

Authors: Asmaa Ibrahim, Co-head of Trauma Care & Health and Lavan Jalal, Psychotherapist

After the women and girls were captured from their villages and homes, ISIS terrorists took their pictures and sent photos over group chats to prospective buyers. Some girls scratched their faces in an attempt to make themselves unattractive to the buyers. The fear of rape and slavery among them was so strong, that rather than live through this nightmare, some captured women and girls cut their wrists, hanged themselves, or threw themselves from the building. The survivors were gathered in halls, dressed, prepared for sale, and blindfolded before being muscled into a car.

In 2014, 23-year-old Sera* was captured by ISIS terrorists as she ran to escape her home in Sinjar. For the next four years, she was held captive. The first month of her captivity, Sera was taken to Badush prison, where she was held with no food, no clean water, and left without any privacy. After the first month, she was sold and purchased by an ISIS terrorist, who brought her to his home, raped her, and then sold her again to an old man who repeated this process until she became pregnant.

Shortly after giving birth to her first son while still in captivity, Iraqi forces liberated the region Sera was being held in, and she was able to return home. But, due to the circumstances of the conception and birth, her family denied her child, leaving her to choose between banishment from her family or giving up her newborn child. Reluctantly, Sera surrendered her firstborn to a local orphanage and hoped to move on from this traumatic experience.

However, like many victims of sex trafficking, Sera started experiencing negative psychological effects caused by her abduction, sale, rape and birth experience. Anxiety, shame, fear, flashbacks, and nightmares were just a few of the symptoms Sera spoke about when she came to Jiyan Foundation’s Trauma Clinic for Women in Chamchamal (Women’s Clinic).

When Sera came to the clinic, she expressed her desire to be isolated. She felt ashamed and guilty, not only for giving her son to the orphanage, but for being raped. Sera felt as though she had somehow perpetrated this crime on herself. The dry coughs in her knuckles, a symptom of overwashing, was something she admitted to doing because she felt contaminated and dirty. Sera said being around people made her feel like the events from her past would happen again, and in those moments, she’d pull at her hair and bite her arms.

At the Women’s Clinic, we have worked for the better part of the past decade to help survivors of the ISIS invasion of our homeland learn how to live with the memories and effects of the cruelty they experienced and move on from them. Sera’s story and her ongoing trauma are emblematic of the many Kurdish and Yazidi women we see in our clinic on a daily basis.

Survivors living in Iraq and Kurdistan-Iraq are among millions across the Middle East who have witnessed decades of prolonged and recurrent wars, conflicts, and terror. Recent research revealed that over 350,000 survivors of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), surviving in a little more than 20 refugee camps, continue to live with the effects of their experiences (Kizilhan & Noll-Hussong 2020). Common traumatic experiences include witnessing the killing of loved ones, forced religious conversion, forced marriage, forced labor, and countless other types of trauma inflicted by constant and recurring human trafficking.

Through the mental health work we do at the Jiyan Foundation, we have seen firsthand how the effects of these atrocities linger long after the incidents occurred. A recent study assessed the prevalence of PTSD as well as complex PTSD among 108 female Yazidi former ISIS captives and found that 50.9% of them had probable complex PTSD, while 20% had probable PTSD. Traumatic experiences caused by human trafficking can also lead to cognitive impairment, memory loss, depression, and even suicide.

For Sera, and the thousands of formerly trafficked people being treated at Jiyan and in programs around the globe, there is hope and a path forward from these nightmares. One of the programs that proved integral to the path forward for women at Jiyan is the Stabilization Program which includes four weeks of 12 sessions on psychoeducation about trauma and PTSD symptoms, coping strategies, grounding, relaxation techniques, and reorientation.

After these four weeks, patients return home to receive long-term treatment at their local Jiyan Foundation treatment center, where they engage in individual, group, and art therapy programs.

Since completing her four-week stabilization program, Sera has participated in bi-weekly sessions with a local psychotherapist. She lives with her family, who has also been educated on her conditions, helping her feel empowered and able to manage these conditions as she goes forward. While Sera still feels guilty about giving up her son, her nightmares have subsided, and she looks forward to participating in regular group therapy sessions to continue on her path to healing.

Our work at Jiyan follows the core values set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We believe in human dignity and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the declaration. We help survivors of human rights violations, regardless of their age, gender, ethnic or religious affiliation. Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights seeks a democratic society that protects the dignity of every human being. One where adults and children realize their rights to life and liberty, and all citizens are free from torture and terror.

“The inclusion of survivors’ cultural, familial, and national contexts has a substantial influence on the advancement of treatment. The Jiyan Clinic possesses a range of attributes that contribute to its substantial impact on the treatment of survivors.”

Dr. Jamal Omar, Psychiatrist at Jiyan Foundation
“Injustice creates conditions that adversely affect the health of individuals and communities. It denies individuals and groups equal opportunities to meet their basic human needs. It violates fundamental human rights; it represents the lack of fairness and equality. That’s why we place justice, truth and reparations front and center in all we do.”

Hasan Ali Omar, Lawyer at Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights

These past two years Jiyan Foundation has proven to be a significant force connecting survivors, NGOs, communities, international organizations and Iraqi authorities in seeking justice for survivors of atrocities in Iraq. Through the Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR), we have come a long way from coalition building, searching for common ground and fervent advocacy to seeing Iraqi lawmakers pass landmark legislation warranting reparations for decades-long abuses.

In our daily work providing legal counsel and representation, more than 1,200 individuals have been provided with free-of-charge legal services addressing mostly cases of civil documentation and domestic disputes.

Fighting against torture
In 2022, our legal teams submitted an alternative report to the Committee Against Torture (CAT) in the context of a regular review of Iraq’s implementation of the Convention Against Torture. Representatives of Jiyan Foundation personally briefed the committee in Geneva on our findings. On June 26th of the same year, together with the C4JR, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, and the General Directorate for Survivors Affairs in Iraq, Jiyan Foundation organized a conference to follow up on CAT’s recommendations, support Iraqi authorities in their implementation, and strengthen the collaborative relations between survivors, civil society organizations, and state authorities. In 2022, we joined the NGO Alliance for Torture-Free Trade.

Legal empowerment for Syrian refugees in Iraq

The Legal Empowerment Pilot Program (LEPP) in Sulamaniyah has successfully built community facilitators to assist Syrian refugees in Iraq in seeking effective legal representation. Last year, we extended this project to Erbil, where a large community of Syrian refugees resides outside refugee camps. Today, eight community facilitators have been trained and assist Syrian refugee communities in Erbil and Sulamaniyah.

Yazidi Female Survivors Law – building a coalition
The initial idea to get Iraqi NGOs to speak with one voice through the Coalition for Just Reparations allowed survivors and the Iraqi Civil Society a seat at the table in the development of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law. Through this previously unheard-of cooperation of diverse groups, survivors contributed to passing legislation that places Iraq among the first countries in the Arab world to recognize conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) survivors and take steps to redress their grievances in line with international standards.

Significant contributions of Jiyan Foundation’s input include specific provisions on reparations, such as financial support, land and housing, medical and psychosocial care, education, and memorialization. In addition, our work helped ensure recognition that ISIL committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Yazidi, Christian, Shabak, and Turkmen ethnoreligious groups.

AHEAD
The challenging task of ensuring that the Yazidi Survivors Law is implemented in an efficient and survivor-centric manner lies ahead. This would require more action, thorough scrutiny, closing the ranks once again, and making sure that justice and reparations for survivors of ISIL atrocities remain a priority, nationally and internationally. In addition, we will be working on fostering a more survivor-centric criminal justice in Iraq, developing and making available tools to measure whether the right to rehabilitation, as specified in the Yazidi Survivors Law, is moving from words to concrete changes for survivors. We are also set to develop practical suggestions for improving the legal and political framework in Iraq, addressing the needs of at-risk children and militarized youth, their families, and their communities. Continued attention will be given to our daily work providing legal counseling and representation to underserved communities in Iraq, as well as the continuation of our Legal Empowerment Pilot Project for Syrian Refugees who live there.
Coalition for Just Reparations – Survivors of conflict related to sexual violence in Iraq

An overview of C4JR activities from June 2019 - December 2021. On March 1, 2021, members of the Iraqi Parliament passed the Yazidi Female Survivors bill. This law based on the initial bill submitted by the Iraqi presidency in April 2019 delivers long-awaited relief. This relief is provided not only to Yazidi women, but also to other survivors belonging to communities targeted by Da-esh/ISIS. C4JR’s advocacy efforts played a significant role in this result.

This manual aims at enhancing the Iraqi civil society organizations’ (CSOs) knowledge in Transitional and Restorative Justice and improving their capacities in planning and implementing relevant activities. It combines theoretical knowledge and practical steps to explore, plan, and implement interventions at the local levels and specifically developed in conformity with the Iraqi context and based on accumulated inputs from civil society actors.

A Toolkit on Transitional & Restorative Justice

The Yazidi (Female) Survivors Law has been globally recognized and prioritized by the UN Security Council, Committee Against Torture, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, UNAMI, UNITAD and Iraqi central government.

- Published a ‘Toolkit on Transitional & Restorative Justice’ to enhance Iraqi civil society organizations’ knowledge of Transitional and Restorative Justice, thus improving their capacities in planning and implementing relevant activities.
- Promoted interreligious solidarity between Yazidi, Christian and Muslim survivor groups throughout Iraq and published two films for online distribution in Iraq.

“Injustice degrades, absolute injustice degrades absolutely. Interethnic and interreligious collaboration on creating justice pathways for all those harmed can lead to a paradigm shift in Iraq.”

Dr. Bojan Gavrilovic
Head of Rights and Justice Program

“We have told our stories more than once, and in more than one place and time. Today we are required to tell our stories again, in front of strangers... There are some survivors that feel uncomfortable when telling their stories in front of strangers. The Iraqi Government should trust us as survivors and make it easier for us to ask for our rights.”

Yazidi Survivor of ISIS atrocities
Democracy & Civil Society

Achievements 2021/22

- Provided Children’s Rights education courses to 4,012 children across Iraq in public schools, IDP & refugee camps
- Expanded the Youth Network’s membership to 50 active members
- Hosted 35 religious representatives in our Dialogue Program
- Our Dialogue Program reached 959 participants

Interreligious dialogue is of paramount importance to the development of a peaceful society. For decades, mistrust and conflict between the diverse communities in Iraq have been the hallmark of the region. After decades of war and terrorism, Jiyan Foundation is placing particular significance on a generation of young adults seeking to build a constructive, mindful society in Iraq. Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, have lived their entire lives in conflicts thrust upon them by religious extremism, political power struggles, and international forces beyond their control. In addition to this, youth from this generation have had to face global climate change, economic disaster, and a worldwide pandemic.

Throughout the year, our Program for Democracy & Civil Society hosts workshops for Youth and established Religious Leaders to participate in community dialogue, learn skills for peaceful communication and present their own perspectives to diverse groups and the general public. These workshops host participants from Duhok, Sinjar, Alqosh, Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk, Chamchamal, Halabja, and Sulaymaniyah, promoting social cohesion at the community level. Religious leaders from Islam, Christianity, Yazidi, Kakai, Zoroastrianism, and other faiths provide the public with inter-faith discussions that have not been seen in the region for decades.

Among the other activities in these workshops, we host lectures, group presentations, theatre units, hikes, visits to local ethnic and religious sites, games, communal cooking events and provide resources for Youth Network members to enact their own actionable projects.

Looking Forward

We will continue to provide the same activities and scale these to reach the most people possible. In 2023 and 2024, we look forward to implementing the dialogue program in our branch in Qamishli, Syria, where we can extend the intercultural reach of our network. In addition, we are seeking funding opportunities to help our Program for Democracy & Civil Society provide the tools and resources our participants need to implement their community-driven projects throughout Kurdistan-Iraq, Iraq & Syria.

Gen Z finds common ground

Paramount to our work is listening to our participants. In 2021 & 2022 members of the Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue developed and implemented projects seeking to build interreligious dialogue, promote human rights, and build on their shared values. These projects were entirely thought out, planned, and accomplished by Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue members.

Projects included planting trees at local parks, schools and public spaces, educating their communities on the importance of using eco-friendly materials, providing human rights education to children in schools throughout the region, and attending elderly care facilities to promote messages of peace and inter-faith coexistence.

Childrens’ rights are human rights

Understanding our basic rights is necessary to combat abuse, build confidence and develop active members of civil society. Through our Dialogue Program and the Youth Network, Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights provided Children’s Rights education to 4,012 children throughout the region. This program receives positive feedback from teachers and parents who see a positive change in the attitudes of children who participate.

Faiths represented in our Dialogue Programs

- Christian
- Islam
- Yazidi
- Kakai
- Zoroastrianism
- Omnist

“We saw intellectual growth of our participants, many of whom have gone on to lead in their own communities and engage with leaders to promote peace.”

Dyari Mustafa, Head of Democracy & Civil Society
Iraq is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, despite being so diverse mistrust and prejudice are widespread among young people across the region. Children grow up in environments that are characterized by enemy images and division that offer few opportunities to meet young people from other cultures or religious beliefs. The regions of Iraq and Kurdistan-Iraq are part of a long history marked by violence and conflict between these various ethnic and religious communities. The Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue harnesses Iraq’s ethnic and religious diversity to promote peaceful coexistence and dialogue in a post-conflict region. Through grassroots projects, the Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue aims to counteract these prejudices, promote peace, and build avenues for democracy.

Throughout each year, members of the Youth Network plan community projects designed to educate and spread awareness on the importance of inter-ethnic peacebuilding, as well as contribute to their society in tangible, practical ways. All of the Youth Network’s projects are designed and implemented by its members. Jyian Foundation for Human Rights helps facilitate these projects and build on their civil society initiatives. In 2021 and 2022 these projects have included, Interreligious dialogue and workshops, human rights education for children in Sinjar, supporting at-risk youth in Iraq, advocating for a safer climate, planting trees, installing public benches, and sharing messages of peace with their communities.

-Jyian’s workshops ask every participant to share passages, quotes, and sayings from their religions on topics such as peace, dialogue, and truth. The workshops include discussions on diversity, lectures, group presentations, theatre units, hikes, visits to local ethnic and religious sites, games, and communal cooking activities to share food and insight into each other’s lives.

"Caring for the environment is emblematic of our duties to one another; protecting it is the responsibility of everyone to each other, regardless of culture or religion.”

-Larsa Imad, Youth Network Coordinator
In these past two years Jiyan Foundation’s Program for Capacity building placed special emphasis on consolidating skills and deepening the expertise of our staff to secure the highest possible standards in our psychotherapeutic services. Our teams invested in follow-up training programs to expand knowledge for our mental health teams in psychotraumatology, child and adolescent psychiatry and psychotherapy.

Developing expertise in our teams

Fostering mental health professionals

The largest part of our capacity-building work is accomplished through the Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights Seminar Program for External Professionals, which seeks to expand our expertise to local professionals not affiliated with Jiyan Foundation. Psychotherapists, social workers, and other mental health professionals receive free education and training from international experts. In 2021 and 2022, this seminar program reached 4523 participants across Iraq and Syria.

“I have rarely attended such an interactive seminar. The trainers met us at eye level and were able to share a lot of their practice and experience with us. The topic of mental health is becoming more and more important, and I would like to travel to Kurdistan again to learn more.”

Participant of Mental Health and Psychosocial Services Workshop

Achievements 2021/22

- Implemented over 20 capacity-building workshops for Jiyan staff
- Provided Training Programs to 155 participants.
- Jiyan’s Seminar Program for External Professionals conducted 286 seminars reaching 4523 people
- Implemented Jiyan’s first-ever Psychotraumatology Training for Baghdad clinical staff and external psychologists from Baghdad (2022)
- Jiyan colleagues completed long-term training workshops in psychotraumatology, supervision, child and adolescent psychiatry and psychotherapy, horticultural therapy

New training & workshops 2021/22

- Narrative Practice with a focus on Female Yazidi Survivors at the Women’s Clinic (2021)
- LGBTQI+ Awareness Training (2021)

Highlighting horticultural therapy

Based on prior feedback, Jiyan’s staff was most pleased to participate in the Horticultural Therapy workshops, where our staff learned techniques to implement this type of therapy. The workshops were conducted by experts from the United States, Germany, Taiwan, and France. These workshops provided a necessary framework for our psychotherapists and social workers to improve and expand services offered at the Healing Garden in Chamchamal.

Intercultural training for psychotherapists working with Yazidi women

In October 2022, Jiyan Foundation held a seven-day coaching program for Clinical Staff at Jiyan Foundation’s Psychosomatic Clinic for Women. During this period, clinical experts and trainers in gender-based sexual violence and trauma who have worked extensively with refugees and the Yazidi community accompanied Jiyan Foundation’s staff in their daily routines providing deeper insight, and on-the-job support. Our mission here is to ensure Jiyan Foundation’s psychotherapists and social workers working with Yazidi women at our Women’s Clinic are the most qualified and best informed both clinically and culturally.

Looking ahead, Jiyan Foundation is seeking to scale our capacity-building programs through the development of an institute for traumatology and mental health in northern Iraq. This long-term project seeks to multiply the reach of our training programs and provide accredited certifications to students living in the region thus further developing the region’s number and quality of mental health professionals. We are currently building partnerships with international universities and experts to develop a practical program, and ensure scalability.
Interview with Dr. Jamal Tawfeeq
Psychiatrist at Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights

How did you start working with Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights?

I first met Mr. Salah Ahmed in 1993. At the time, Saddam Hussein was in power, and this was just after the Anfal Genocide. I am with Mr. Salah as my friend as my brother. Well, in 2003 Mr. Salah told me he wanted to introduce psychotherapy and trauma treatment to survivors of torture in Iraq. Back then, it was called the Kirkuk Center for Torture Victims. From that moment, I gave myself to his mission. As you know, today Jiyan Foundation is providing life-saving mental health and medical support to the survivors of human rights violations across the country. In this way, I see that Mr. Salah has accomplished much more than what he set out to do twenty years ago.

I, myself am a psychiatrist, and have been working with Jiyan Foundation since the beginning.

You started working for Jiyan Foundation when it was the Kirkuk Center for Torture Victims. You have seen it go from one center to now more than ten facilities. That’s a big leap in the size of the organization and the number of patients that you are seeing.

Yes, right. You know the story of chemical weapons, torture, and political violence; people commonly live with trauma. Through this, I’ve seen two things. Number one, I’ve been around long enough to see recurrent trauma, a collective and transgenerational trauma, when a group of people are exposed to the same homicide, torture or event. These events change the fabric of our society for generations to come.

Second, what’s important, in my experience, I see many people who have principles, who live their lives according to their principles to help their communities. These people process their trauma, maybe quicker or more effectively, because they have an outlet or a reason to grow. When people focus their efforts on building a better society and preventing past atrocities from recurring, they tend to respond better to treatment than those who live without these principles. This is of course, just my personal experience.

As a psychiatrist did the types of patients you see change over time?

In terms of the classification of the kinds of symptoms and mental disorders, yes absolutely. You know every ten or fifteen years we have changes and updates to the classifications or terminologies used in our work; this is all academic. However, the symptoms we see tend to repeat themselves. This is in part why experience as a psychiatrist or mental health professional is so important. When you have experience, when you are a good listener to the patient, you will pick up on things.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is very common with people in Iraq. Many people suffer from childhood trauma, sexual abuse, and violence that lasts their entire lives. I had one adult patient for example, who was suffering from instances of sexual abuse she experienced as a child. She had not spoken about these events for her entire life, and it just lived in her mind like a toxin.

So when you do get a patient, like the one you just described who was sexually abused, how do you begin to address it with that person?

The patient is usually seeking help with many abnormal symptoms. I mean physical symptoms, and in this case, she is not focused on her mental health because she’s focusing on her physical pain. In many cases, these are psychosomatic symptoms, a physical distress caused by psychological trauma. In these cases, the patient is coming in for medical treatment, and she will see a medical doctor. After examining her, the doctor will refer the patient to me. Commonly, our patients at Jiyan Foundation meet with both medical and mental health professionals, and many of them come in seeking relief from physical symptoms.

When I meet with the patient, they will often describe their own anxiety in public spaces or other hints that point to a past occurrence. After a few sessions, the patient and I will begin to develop trust, and only then can we begin to talk about these past traumas.

Sometimes the trauma is so strong that the patient may require medication to help them function in their day-to-day life. These are the sorts of things I address as a psychiatrist.

The goal, of course, is to address these traumas so that the patient can lead a normal life without fear, anxiety, or the need for medication. It’s for this reason that Jiyan Foundation uses a holistic approach to recovery. It’s why our patients usually have sessions with physicians, psychotherapists, and a psychiatrist. We all work together on each individual to provide the best treatment we can.

What would you say is the most important lesson for people to take away from your experience working with Jiyan Foundation?

I’ve learned in my years that no one can heal alone. You cannot take a traumatized person away from their family and bring them somewhere alone. We must bring the whole community into the healing process. We must educate and include the community to support each other.

Second, we must have principles and goals to work toward. These principles for equality, justice, and human rights provide us with purpose. As humans, we are much more successful when we have family, community, and principles we can hold dear. I love Jiyan Foundation because we take these lessons to heart, and build our programs based on these things.
Built in response to therapist requests at Jiyan Foundation, the Healing Garden is a place of rest and security for survivors who have experienced violence and persecution. Clients who use the Healing Garden for psychotherapy and mental health services are accompanied by our specially trained therapeutic team who utilize a holistic approach to recovery.

Here our clients can engage with our animal helpers as a way to develop empathetic relationships with living things. Survivors of trauma and those with health concerns can engage in horticultural therapy, a technique which involves tending to plants to develop motor function, muscle memory and reduce stress. The Healing Garden is publicly accessible and free-of-charge hosting several school trips, outings, and activities for refugees each year.

In 2022 we completed construction on a new therapy building at the Healing Garden. Here we host group sessions, special events, and gatherings.

In this photo Chamchamal’s staff from the treatment center, Healing Garden and Trauma Clinic for Women celebrate the projects completion.

Sustainable Sanctuary: Why we prioritized solar energy at the Healing Garden

Kurdistan-Iraq struggles with a shortage of electric power. People in the region experience daily power outages from their primarily oil-burning power plants. When outages occur, individual diesel generators that can be seen on the sidewalks in front of many buildings kick in. The noise and fumes caused by these truck-sized machines dominate streets and neighbourhoods. For a long time, this was the obvious yet expensive solution to the frequent and unpredictable power outages.

Jiyan Foundation’s Healing Garden in Chamchamal is known as a model and pioneer in treating survivors of war, torture, and sexualized violence. In Chamchamal, like many small towns and villages throughout the region, public electricity is only available for a few hours daily. The lack of reliable electricity adversely affects the animals receiving veterinary care and therapeutic treatment for patients. The loud noise produced by diesel engines used to make up for electrical interruptions irritates Jiyan Foundation’s psychotherapy patients, the Healing Garden’s animals, and the local public, who use the garden as a sanctuary.

Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights has committed to resolving this by installing state-of-the-art solar panels at the Healing Garden. With support from German nonprofit Reiner Lemoine Stiftung, this new source of clean energy produces 82.5% of the energy needs at the Healing Garden, completely replacing the reliance on diesel generators and guaranteeing no power outages.

To make sure that knowledge is rooted locally and contributes to promoting this sustainable energy production, Jiyan Foundation has employed maintenance of the solar system by promising technicians of the University of Sulaymaniyah.

Overall, installing a solar energy system has provided the Healing Garden with guaranteed electricity, reduced noise pollution, cleaner air, savings of $12,000 per year, and employs an educated local workforce to guarantee its functioning well into the future. The emu, donkeys, and horses have responded especially well to the reduced noise, and educational activities on sustainable practices are now further supported by demonstrating this new technology to students and children.
Special Projects
The Healing Garden

Animal-Assisted Interventions
Meet our animal helpers at the Healing Garden

Our animal helpers work hard every day to empower survivors and give courage to children. The people who come to the Healing Garden, our sanctuary for animals and patients alike, are often survivors of violence and trauma. These experiences can result in many conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, uncontrollable thoughts, excessive fear, and worry which can prevent them from leading relatively normal lives. Jiyan’s animal helpers provide relief, boost confidence, and give women and children a safe space to come to express their emotions.

Two years ago I met a young boy named Aziz*, who would not speak. Worried for him, his mother brought him to our psychotherapeutic treatment center in Chamchamal. In our first meeting, Aziz would only sit completely still, not acknowledging myself or others. He made little eye contact and was always looking away or toward the floor. Twice a week our psychotherapists invited Aziz to our Healing Garden in Chamchamal where he could engage with the animals. Feeding them, petting them, and caring for them as he wished. It was obvious to his psychotherapists and myself that Aziz wasn’t entirely comfortable until, one day, a small, newly hatched duckling crawled onto his lap.

I remember watching as he picked up the duckling in his hands, pet it, and smiled. Since then every day when Aziz would return to our Healing Garden, he would look around, in search of his friend. As though it could feel his presence, this little duckling would quack and run toward Aziz—unfailing, every time.

I had never seen anything like this before. Perhaps it was because the duckling was so young when they had met, or maybe it was just fate, but as the weeks went by and the duckling grew it would quack and run toward Aziz. Every week, twice a week. In fact, the first sound I had ever heard from Aziz was his own "quack!" toward his feathered friend.

This sound was a breakthrough.

Seeing the potential of this relationship, our psychotherapists invited the little duckling, whom we named Gazî, which means hope in Kurdish-Sorani, to join Aziz in his sessions. After six months, with the now full-grown duck on his lap, Aziz spoke his first words to our psychotherapists.

At only ten years old, we had discovered that Aziz had experienced a lifetime of violence at the hands of his father. We learned that he was sexually abused and beaten. These experiences caused Aziz to regress into himself and developed a fear of communicating.

Many children in the northern Kurdish region of Iraq have suffered for years from extreme violence at the hands of ISIS or at home. With the help of animals, children can feel safe and develop the confidence to communicate their experiences.

I'm happy to say that Aziz still visits the Healing Garden to engage in our therapeutic programs. He is no longer experiencing the violence or abuse he once had, and his friendship with Gazî remains strong.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

*Name changed to protect identity
Taken during the opening ceremony for our newest treatment center in Baghdad. The center serviced more than 500 clients in its first six months.

Members of the Youth Network advocate for a safer climate with a poster and information campaign.

We consider training a top priority to ensure our staff and external professionals are working with the most up-to-date information and methods possible.

Repairing a seminar building at the Healing Garden using traditional and sustainable Kurdish building methods.

Our psychotherapists at the Trauma Clinic for Women are hosting a group therapy session for Yazidi survivors of ISIS kidnapings.

Families and local residents are welcome to use the Healing Garden to celebrate and relax among its vast gardens and animal friends.

Celebrating Children’s Day in Alqosh, our team uses art-therapy techniques to build trust and teach children about their basic human rights.

Wild birds flock to sanctuary at Jiyan’s Healing Garden, joining our animal helpers.

Members of the Youth Network advocate for a safer climate with a poster and information campaign.
Jiyan's Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue conducts children’s rights education to rural 1st graders in Sinjar.

Thanks to our donors, Jiyan Foundation fed and provided relief to 438 families in northeast Syria during the Covid19 pandemic.

Our mobile teams provide medical support to refugees and internally displaced people living in camps across the region.

Spreading awareness and reducing stigma about mental health remains a top priority, especially in our newest center in Baghdad.

In May 2022, Yazidi Princess Mayan Khairi recognized Jiyan Foundation for our work supporting Yazidi women and survivors.

Jiyan’s Youth Network shares gifts and messages of peace with elderly residents in Sinjar.

Survivor of ISIS kidnapping, Nineveh after meeting women of different faiths who survived similar atrocities.

“I feel they are my sisters. I want to hug them all at once.”

Jiyan’s Youth Network for Peace and Dialogue conducts children’s rights education to rural 1st graders in Sinjar.
Facts & Figures
Across All Programs & Centers

All clients based on target group

- Locals: 5,050
- IDPs: 3,602
- Refugees: 2,752
- Returnees: 291
- TOTAL: 11,695

All adult clients by sex

- Male: 26.4%
- Female: 73.6%

Self-reported ethnicity of clients

- Kurdish: 63%
- Arabic: 30%
- Assyrian: 4%
- Turkmen: 1%
- Other: 2%

Total sessions provided

- Psychotherapeutic Services: 5%
- Medical Services: 15%
- Legal Services: 15%
- Social Services: 15%
- Physiotherapeutic Services: 74%

Number of program services provided by mobile teams by region

- Services to IDPs
- Services to refugees
- Services to locals

Services Provided Based on Sex and Age

- Adult Male
- Adult Female
- Child
### Financial Transparency

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**Amount Carried forward for next year**

1,715,168.42

643,001.32

### Our Donors

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**Total Funding**

4,302,408.12

3,326,852.71
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- International Organization for Migration
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- bishop Khalil Botros, Kirkuk
- Archbishop Yousif Toma, Kirkuk
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- Zad Organization, Sulaymaniyah
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- UPP, Mosul
- Harikar
- Mercy Hand, Mosul
- Acted organization, Qamishlo
- Save the Children, Qamishlo
- IRC, Qamishlo
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Bakhtiar Hadi Hassan
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Bland Barzan Ameen
Dana Khalid Hammed
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Ezzedin Mahmood Salem
Fathee Rasho Dahar
Fatma Mahmood Abdullah
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Ghalib Qadir Hamza
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Youfis Ali Noaman
Yousef Mahmoon Oso

Medical Doctors

Dana Mustafa Mahmood
Darya Othman Abd
Maha Khalil Aziz
Maryam Raed Mekhead
Mustafa Mohammed Sheet
Rahmah Kamil Faisal Alghareeb
Saja Hussein Ali Al Janabi
Suhaim Jameel Rashid
Waleed Azad Omar
Zaid Azhar Ibraheem Alrawi
Zhiwar Omar Abdul

Physiotherapists

Abdabak Omer Ismael Al-Salhi
Hedi Khalil Ahmed
Kirmaz Sadic Shkor
Kozen Ammin Mohammed
Nubair Hassan Khaljat
Shawkat Haji Saeed

Drivers

Araz Mustafa Mohammed
Aryan Othman Abdalla
Firas Georges Abd
Karim Kaka-Amee Karem
Marnob Abyd Yaqqo
Muneer Narsi Wardah
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Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights provides mental health, psychotherapy, medical treatment & other support services to survivors of trauma, terror, domestic violence & human rights violations. Our programs support 9 treatment centers, a clinic for Yazidi women & families, a Healing Garden and mobile teams helping survivors in 11 refugee & IDP camps & 9 regions throughout Kurdistan-Iraq, Iraq & Syria.

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You empower survivors to take their lives back.

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- $50 can provide four hours of psychotherapy in an individual or group session
- $150 can provide three months of treatment to survivor for a chronic disease
- $500 can provide ten months of treatment to a person with a chronic disease

All donations will support Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights’ mission in the next two years.

Outlook
Over the next two years Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights will...
- Enhance the networking and the work of the Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) to advocate for the implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law
- Enhance MHPSS activities and knowledge for children who are VICTIMS OF (SEXUAL) VIOLENCE in Iraq
- Strengthen projects and programs for former CHILD SOLDIERS enslaved by terrorist groups and their communities
- Expand its medical and psychological services in northern SYRIA and BAGHDAD
- Create an international TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE advancing capacity building in intercultural psychotherapy

You provide life-saving mental health, medical and social support to survivors of violence and trauma.

Other ways to give

Contact
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