

Press kit for the exhibition *Nobody's Listening*

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Thursday Press Dates

Press conference/tour

11 am CEST, ZKM Museum Balcony

Zoom press briefing in English, Arabic, Kurmanji

3 pm CEST:

<https://zoom.us/j/95306592710?pwd=U0ptcW81bVYvR3BMNDRGdno0SU4xQT09>

Friday Exhibition Opening

Friday, 01.10.21, 6 pm CEST, ZKM Media Theater and digital at: zkm.de/en/livestream

Exhibition *Nobody's Listening*

Museum Balcony of the ZKM | Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe

4 – 5 pm CEST | Panel discussion with Nahrin Malki, Falah al Rasam and Ivana Waleed moderated by Jan Ilhan Kizilhan | ZKM Media Theatre and digital

Yazidi and Christian artists talk with Yazidi psychologist and traumatologist Prof. Dr. Jan Ilhan Kizilhan about their experiences and works as well as the larger political context of the genocide against the Yazidis in Iraq.

6 – 7.30 pm CEST | Exhibition Opening | ZKM Media Theater and digital

Representatives from politics, science and art will speak at the exhibition opening, both nationally and internationally. Among others, Florian Hassler, State Secretary in the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg, Dr. Frank Mentrup, Lord Mayor of the City of Karlsruhe and Chairman of the ZKM Foundation Board, Prof. Dr. h.c. mult. Peter Weibel, Artistic and Scientific Director, ZKM | Karlsruhe and Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, Deputy UN Special Representative for Iraq.

The event will be held in English and streamed on the ZKM online platform and the STP.

About the exhibition

Nobody's Listening.

An Immersive Exhibition Promoting Justice for Iraq's Forgotten Genocide

02.10.2021 – 09.01.2022, ZKM Museum Balcony

Nobody's Listening is an exhibition of Yazidi artists that commemorates the genocide committed by the so-called ISIS against the Yazidi community in northern Iraq on August 3, 2014. The exhibition shows works by 19 artists, including photographs, paintings and sculptures. Most notable are the virtual reality works that take visitors into an immersive experience of Sinjar, Iraq, and confront them with the devastating consequences of the genocide.

The genocide continues: Some 3,000 Yazidi women and children are still missing or in captivity. The exhibition creates an immersive environment that raises greater international awareness of the events of the 2014 genocide and its profoundly devastating consequences for the Yazidi people, Christians, and other religious minorities and their cultural heritage in northern Iraq. Seven years after the genocide, the forward-looking exhibition focuses on what must happen next. It provides a platform for survivors and displaced people to tell their stories, showcase their expressions in painting, sculpture and poetry – and make their voices heard about what still needs to be done.

Nobody's Listening is a touring exhibition organized by Yazda and Upstream in cooperation with the Society for Threatened Peoples e.V. and the Institute for Transcultural Health Research of the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University, conceived and produced by Easy Tiger Creative Ltd, shown for the first time by the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe and generously funded by the Ministry of State Baden-Württemberg, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The exhibition is under the patronage of Winfried Kretschmann, Minister President of Baden-Württemberg. It will be accompanied at the ZKM by an extensive educational programme and an international symposium supported by the Cultural Office of the City of Karlsruhe on December 9, 2021 on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Genocide.

Accompanying the exhibition, the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) is organising an educational campaign at German schools and universities in the coming school year. Students from the 10th grade onwards are to learn about the Yazidi religion and be sensitised to the precarious situation in northern Iraq.

The curator in conversation about the exhibition

1.) Mr. Ryan D'Souza, what moved you to found this exhibition project? What is the history behind the project?

I had the honour of meeting Ms. Nadia Murad and Mr. Ahmed Khudida in 2016 on the side-lines of the World Humanitarian Summit. It was a privilege to work with Yazda and Ms. Murad on their incredible efforts to mobilize the United Nations Security Council to establish a UN investigative team to bring IS to justice for their atrocities.

After this global campaign, I moved to Somalia to work for the United Nations. Towards the end of the deployment, I was speaking to Mr. Khudida about the situation facing the Yazidis. Sadly, 7 years after the genocide not a single IS fighter has been brought to justice for the genocide and the risks of further atrocities remain heightened.

It is well-established that genocide prevention and meaningful reconciliation require education, awareness-raising, and advocacy. Due to frequent exposure, traditional forms of advocacy are losing their influence and impact. I believe we should use new technologies, such as Virtual Reality, and art with an integrated advocacy campaign as a means to present, educate, and remind people of the scale and magnitude of the Yazidi genocide, as well as to amplify the voices and continued struggles of persecuted ethno-religious communities in northern Iraq and across the world.

We premiered the Virtual Reality experience in 2020 in the Iraqi Parliament and the impact has been phenomenal in terms of enabling politicians and the Iraqi public to gain a deeper insight into the tragedy that befell the Yazidi community. We also conducted a research assessment sponsored by USAID and the International Organization for Migration, involving 120 participants in 5 cities across Iraq to understand the impact of the VR. The results highlighted the impact of the VR experience to inspire positive change and actions in response to the Yazidis genocide and support of the Yazidi community. We now plan to roll out the VR experience across Iraq and also hope that it will have a similar impact in Germany. We then plan to take this exhibition to other parts of the world to raise awareness and deliver meaningful political change.

2.) What is the focus of the exhibition at the ZKM?

The primary objectives of Nobody's Listening are to refocus attention back on the threat still posed by IS, the ongoing plight of survivors and affected communities, and to amplify their calls for justice and recognition of the genocide.

3.) During your close work with Yazidi survivors, which story has moved you the most?

When we went to Iraq to film the VR experience in 2019, I met three boys in an IDP camp near Dohuk. We went to have tea with their mother who spoke about the difficult situation they faced today and how they are still missing relatives who were still in captivity. At one point, one of the boys ran towards the mother and started wailing into her stomach and screaming in Arabic. Afterwards my Yazda colleague informed me that he was saying that he wanted to be back in Syria. The children, and much of the Yazidi community, are still deeply traumatized today and there is very little psychosocial support to meet their needs.

It is an honour to launch this exhibition in the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The Special Quota project, which provided urgent psychosocial support to 1,100 Yazidi women, should be a source of inspiration for other governments around the world. The mental health crisis facing communities, particularly during this difficult pandemic, must be addressed comprehensively.

4.) What stories are told through the exhibited artworks, photographs and VR experience?

Nobody's Listening is a forward-looking exhibition. Rather than looking at the past, the survivors and artists have provided strong messages on what needs to happen today. They talk about what justice and recognition means to them as well as the importance of countering violent extremism, protecting cultural heritage and strengthening religious freedom in order to prevent future atrocities.

5.) What would you like the visitors to take with them after having experienced the exhibition?

I hope that visitors will learn that genocides are still taking place today and that we all have a collective responsibility to help prevent future atrocities. *Nobody's Listening* has four key advocacy goals: national and international recognition of the genocide; bringing IS members to justice; memorializing the genocide; and supporting efforts to protect all religions from persecution. In keeping with Yazidi cultural traditions, we have a memorial tree where visitors can make pledges of commitment by tying ribbons onto the tree using different coloured ribbons which correspond to the advocacy goals. I hope by the end of the exhibition this tree will be full of colour and solidarity. We also organizing an international symposium at the museum on 9th December, which is the International Day to Commemorate the Victims of genocide. We are delighted the Society for Threatened Peoples will be launching an education campaign tied to the exhibition in schools and universities across Germany.

Short CV of the Curator

Ryan Xavier D'Souza has been working on human rights advocacy and genocide prevention for the past 10 years. He has worked for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and was recently a visiting fellow with the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford.

Before joining the United Nations peace operation in Somalia, he led advocacy and policy at the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, a New York-based human rights organization. During this time he supported efforts by Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Laureate, and Amal Clooney to mobilize the UN Security Council to establish an Investigative Team that will support domestic efforts to hold ISIS accountable for the genocide in northern Iraq.

Voices on the exhibition

Ryan D'Souza (Curator of the exhibition): „With this exhibition, we want to raise awareness of the genocide and inspire action to promote justice for the victims. At the same time, we also want to highlight the impressive resilience of the Yazidi, Christian and other ethnoreligious communities that is expressed in the works on display.“

Hala Safil Amo (Yazidi activist and survivor of the Genocide): „For the people of Sinjar, the genocide is not over — even after seven years. About 3,000 Yazidi women and children are still missing. Of the original 400,000 or so Yazidi believers in the region, not even half that number lives there now. Hundreds of thousands continue to live as displaced people in makeshift camps or with private hosts.“

Ivana Waleed (Yazidi activist and genocide survivor): „The *Nobody's Listening* Exhibition is an important way to remind people of the horrors of ISIS, but also to inspire action to ensure this never happens again to Yazidis, Christians or any other Iraqi community.“

Amal Clooney (Human Rights Lawyer): „*Nobody's Listening* is a moving exhibition that pays tribute to the courage of the survivors of genocide and amplifies their call for justice.“

Winfried Kretschmann (Minister-President of the State of Baden-Württemberg): „I am very pleased that the State Government of Baden-Württemberg was able to bring 1,000 women and children, most of them Yazidis, who are in especial need of protection, from northern Iraq to Baden-Württemberg in 2015 and give them a second home. However, the situation for the Yazidi community in northern Iraq remains critical. For this reason, the State Government is now making efforts at the Federal level to obtain approval for another special quota of people in particular need of protection, especially women and children.“

Florian Hassler (State Secretary at the Ministry of State Baden-Württemberg): „*Nobody's Listening* reminds us of the devastating consequences for the survivors of the 2014 ISIS genocide in northern Iraq that continue to this day. At the same time, this important exhibition reminds us of all those who lost their lives or are still in captivity. As the state of Baden-Württemberg, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the crimes are dealt with legally. We will continue our humanitarian commitment in the region. I am very grateful to the organizations involved that the traveling exhibition is beginning its international run in Karlsruhe.“

Dr. Frank Mentrup (Lord Mayor of the City of Karlsruhe and Chairman of the ZKM Foundation Board): „Many thousands of Yazidis were persecuted and killed by IS in 2014, but many women and children were also abducted and abused — and many still are being. We are horrified by this and share in these people's sorrow. However, we also have deep admiration for the courage and resolve of all of those who have survived these atrocities and are now struggling to be heard by the global community and obtain justice!“

Peter Weibel (Artistic and Scientific Director of the ZKM): „Genocides against religious communities are crimes against humanity. Since its foundation, the ZKM has dedicated itself to the fight against these inhumane violations of civilisation with exhibitions and events such as *Cross-border. Contemporary Women Artists from the Arab Mediterranean* (2013), *Global Activism* (2013-2014), *Writers for Freedom* (2015-2016), participation in the *Artists at Risk* network, which provides scholarships to politically persecuted artists in art institutions (since 2019), etc. The freedom of art is a part of human rights and human rights are a part of art. Therefore, it is a necessity for the ZKM to defend human rights.“

The participating organisations

About the ZKM

The ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe is a globally unique cultural institution that has extended the original tasks of a museum. It is a house of all media and genres, a house of both spatially based arts such as painting, photography, and sculpture, and time-based arts such as film, video, media art, music, dance, theater, and performance. Founded in 1989 with the mission of firmly keeping society, change, and the future in its view, the ZKM — as an alliance of research, natural sciences, technology and art — seeks to understand the complexity of the digital world and to make its findings accessible worldwide via a comprehensive range of services.

Website: www.zkm.de/en

About the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP)

The Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) has been working internationally since 1968 for the protection of minorities, and especially for the rights of religious, linguistic, and ethnic minorities as well as indigenous peoples. It defends the human rights of groups threatened by genocide, ethnocide, and displacement by disseminating reliable information, lobbying, political campaigning, conflict prevention initiatives, and advocacy on behalf of refugees of threatened peoples. The STP is independent and financed solely by private donations and membership fees. It represents the interests of threatened minorities on all continents through politics, associations, and the media. The STP has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This gives it the right to speak before UN bodies and it can make the voices of various minorities heard. The Council of Europe has granted participatory status to the STP.

Website: www.gfbv.de

About the ITG

The Institute for Transcultural Health Research (ITG) at the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University in Villingen-Schwenningen devotes its research and teaching to health science issues against the background of the increasing internationalisation of health research and health care. Among other things, it deals with transculturally oriented health research with different culturally shaped concepts such as health, illness, healing and the image of man on which these concepts are based.

Website: www.dhbw-vs.de/TCultHS.html

About Yazda

Yazda is a global community-led institution that protects and supports all religious and ethnic minority communities, including Assyrians, Chaldeans, Kakais, Shabaks, Turkmens, and Yazidis in Iraq, the Kurdistan Region, and Syria. Founded in 2014 at the start of the Islamic State's genocide of the Yazidis and war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated against other minorities, Yazda leads advocacy and strategic projects in Dohuk, Sinjar, and the Nineveh Plains, as well as in global diaspora centers.

Website: www.yazda.org

Organisiert von:



Produziert von:



Kooperationspartner:



Unterstützt von:

