

General Description

Tens of thousands of Yazidis fled to Turkey following the attacks by the Islamic State (IS) on Sinjar in Iraq in early August 2014. As of October 2014, thousands of Yazidis still remain in Turkey and have found refuge throughout the South-eastern part of the country. Of those Yazidis living in refugee camps, a small percentage has settled in a camp run by the Disaster and Management Authority of Turkey (AFAD) in the Midyat district of the Mardin province, while others are in camps run by municipalities within the region. Additional Yazidi refugees, often unregistered, have settled in construction sites and abandoned or vacant buildings either in villages or city centres, in Diyarbakır, Siirt, Batman, Mardin, Sanliurfa and Sirnak.



Refugee Camp

Photograph Support to Life, Natalia Sancha, Diyarbakır, 2015

According to interviews conducted by an STL Assessment Team with Yazidis living in Batman and Diyarbakır, there are 2 leading challenges faced by the refugees.

First of all, weather conditions in the region are particularly difficult during winter, with peaks of sub-zero temperatures. After fleeing their homes with minimal supplies and clothing, Yazidi men, women, and children are living in tents and in sub-standard conditions, which leave them extremely vulnerable to rain, snow and freezing temperatures. More supplies are urgently needed for the refugees to be able to endure the cold temperatures.

Secondly, due to violence and displacement they experienced, the Yazidis have faced mental health issues; therefore, psychosocial support needs to be strengthened, especially since the most vulnerable segments of the population, including children and young adults, are suffering from extreme distress. There is also a need to create opportunities for women to socialize to further support emotional healing for families. These issues, determined through STL's findings, are particularly important in the camps given that the on-going crisis in Iraq and Syria will mean that the Yazidis will be living in 16m² – sized tents for at least 6 additional months.