Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights calls on Iraqi government to ensure access to rehabilitation for survivors of the Ba'ath regime and victims of recent human rights abuses.

Erbil, 9 April 2015 – On the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the fall of the Ba'ath regime, the Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights urges the Iraqi government to provide victims of past human rights violations with long overdue compensation and remedies, and to assist those who have recently suffered persecution and violence.

"Since the terrorists' advance in 2014, we observe an increase in former patients returning to our centers. The horrors of the present remind them of their own traumatic past", says Salah Ahmad, founder and president of the Jiyan Foundation. "When I recall the ordeals of my first patient in Kirkuk I see alarming parallels to our most recent cases. While the first one was an imprisoned woman subjected to torture and rape by Saddam’s henchmen, we now treat traumatized Yazidi women and girls who were able to escape sexual enslavement. All of them are in need of and have a right to psychotherapeutic and medical care."

In the wake of the refugee crisis in Iraq and the war against the so-called "Islamic State (IS)" , the past seems more relevant than ever. From the late seventies until 2003, Saddam Hussein's rule cost the lives of about half a million Iraqis. They not only had to fight his wars but also endured police repression, arbitrary detention, torture and mass executions. In the course of the so-called Anfal Operations, Saddam Hussein directed a genocidal campaign against the Kurdish people and other minorities. To date, survivors lack official recognition of their sufferings and adequate medical and psychological assistance.

The Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights, originally established as Kirkuk Center for Torture Victims in 2005, is a human rights organization offering free rehabilitation services to survivors of torture and inhuman treatment in Iraq. The Jiyan Foundation is supported by the German Foreign Office, the European Union, the United Nations, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and private donors.