

# The New York Times

The Opinion Pages | LETTERS

## Horrorified by ISIS' Use of Sex Slaves

AUG. 18, 2015

**To the Editor:**

Re "[Enslaving Young Girls, the Islamic State Builds a Vast System of Rape](#)" ("State of Terror" series, front page, Aug. 14):

ISIS is abducting Yazidi women and girls and obliterating their identity through crimes of rape and sexual slavery for the same reason that Yazidi men and boys are marched out to nearby fields and "sprayed with automatic fire" — for the purpose of destroying a different religious group. This is genocide.

ISIS leaders sanction the forcible transfer and rape of Yazidi children. Women and girls are being sold, forcibly impregnated to give birth to Muslim children and often forced to marry ISIS fighters and convert to Islam.

Rape and other sexual crimes against women, accompanying mass executions targeting a distinct community, are central to genocide. This has been demonstrated time and time again, including in the genocides perpetrated against the Armenians, the Tutsis in Rwanda, Kurdish women in Iraq, Muslim women in the former Yugoslavia and more recently against the Christian women and girls by Boko Haram, an ISIS affiliate.

After the international community failed to respond to the Rwandan genocide, we vowed, "Never again." Both laws and morality demand that the international community live up to its responsibility to protect the Yazidis. There must be concrete efforts coordinated by the United Nations to rescue the abducted Yazidi women and girls, prevent future abductions and bring the ISIS perpetrators to justice. This time, we must not repeat the mistakes of the past.

JANET BENSHOOF

President  
Global Justice Center  
New York