



**STOCKHOLMS TINGSRÄTT**  
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# Conviction in a case concerning genocide, crimes against humanity and gross war crimes

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**Stockholms tingsrätt**

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Today the Stockholm District Court convicted a 52-year-old woman of genocide, crimes against humanity and gross war crimes committed in the winter and spring of 2015 in Raqqa, Syria. The sentencing value of the criminal acts is deemed to correspond to a prison sentence of 16 years. Taking the previously meted out prison sentence into consideration, the length of the prison sentence is set at 12 years. The injured parties have been awarded damages.

The case relates to The Islamic State (IS) attacks against the Yazidi population, which were initiated through coordinated attacks on Yazidi villages in the Sinjar Region in Northern Iraq in August 2014. IS subjected the Yazidi population to, inter alia; executions, family separations, slavery, forced conversions, persecution and gross sexual assaults. The criminal acts were widespread and constituted a systematic attack directed at the Yazidi civilian population. The acts were committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Yazidi religious group. It is the assessment of the District Court that the acts IS committed during the attack and their subsequent attacks against the Yazidi population can be deemed to constitute genocide, crimes against humanity and gross war crimes.

The injured parties in the case are nine women and children from the Yazidi religious group. At the time relevant to the case, six of the injured parties were children, including one infant. All the injured parties were taken captive in connection with the IS attack on the Yazidi villages, after their male relatives had been executed. Subsequently, they, along with a very large number of other Yazidi women and children, were enslaved and imprisoned by IS and transported between different

holding sites in Iraq and Syria. Male IS-members subjected the injured parties to varying degrees of assault and molestation, and the injured parties also lived in very meagre conditions without food and clean water. They were forced to carry out domestic work and to convert to Islam. The women were subjected to systematic rape by male IS-members. Three of the children were separated from their mothers. Furthermore, the injured parties were entered into slave trade when they were transferred between different male IS-members.

After approximately five months in captivity and of enslavement at the hands of different male IS-members, the injured parties came to the home of the woman who has now been convicted. The woman kept them imprisoned and treated them as her property by holding them as slaves for a period of, in most cases, five months. The woman has exercised the powers attaching to right of ownership over the injured parties, and also subjected them to various forms of abuse. Inter alia, she

- Forced the injured parties to become practicing Muslims by forcing them to participate in Islamic instruction, forced them to recite the Quran and to pray four or five times each day,
- Forced them to wear clothes carrying religious significance, such as the hijab or niqab,
- Forbade them from speaking Kurmanji and from practicing their religion and culture,
- Assaulted and molested some of the injured parties and referred to all of them using demeaning invectives such as "infidels" or "slaves",
- Showed them propaganda films in which Yazidis are executed by male IS-members and in connection with this said that IS will kill all the infidels,
- Severely restricted their freedom of movement within the home,
- Forced them to perform domestic chores in a slave-like way,
- Restricted the food and necessities provided to the injured parties,
- Participated in photographing the injured parties in preparation for onward transfer,
- Assisted in bringing about the onward transfer of some of the injured parties to other IS-members.

Through her actions, the woman upheld the imprisonment and the enslavement of the injured parties initiated by IS in connection with the August 2014 attack. Given the fact that she participated in the onward transfer of the injured parties, she is also responsible for enabling their continued imprisonment and enslavement. Some of the injured parties were freed via smugglers a couple of months after they left the

woman's home. However, three of the children, who were of school age, did not become free until three and seven years later, respectively. One young woman has not been found.

In their judgment, the District Court stresses that the comprehensive system of enslavement of the Yazidi population implemented by IS was one of the crucial elements in the perpetration of the genocide, the crimes against humanity and gross war crimes that the Yazidi population was subjected to. The enslavement of Yazidi women and children was a prerequisite for the sexual slavery, the forced labour and the forced conversion. Further, the enslavement was required in order to separate children from their parents and to forcibly transfer the children from their parents and their religious group. In the same manner, the enslavement and the imprisonment of the injured parties were necessary conditions for the criminal acts committed by the woman now convicted.

Thus, in the view of the District Court, the woman shared the IS intent to destroy a religious group and her criminal acts form part of other similar acts committed in accordance with the underlying strategy and ideology of IS. The existence of the Yazidi religious group came under threat because of these acts. The acts were also part of a pattern of acts committed by IS and IS-adherents against the Yazidi civilian population, which taken together constitute a widespread and systematic attack against civilians. The acts were also closely related to the ongoing armed conflict in Syria at the time.

The District Court assesses the sentencing value of the criminal acts to correspond to a prison sentence of 16 years. The crimes do not only constitute an exceptionally serious violation of the life and integrity of specific individuals, but also of fundamental human values and humanity. To exercise the powers attaching to right of ownership over another human being is a tremendous violation of the integrity of that person, as it deprives the person of their human dignity. Moreover, the woman had a strong ideological intent to destroy a religious group. The crimes were perpetrated over the course of nearly five months. In total, nine injured parties, seven of who were children, were subjected by the convicted woman to serious mental harm which will affect them for the rest of their lives.

Previously meted out punishments are to be taken into account when sentencing. For this reason, the District Court has set the prison sentence at 12 years.

The injured parties have been awarded damages to the amount of 150 000 SEK each.

## Kontakt

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