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14.06.2017

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Press Conference with Lamya Haji Bashar: "We will stay firm and even stronger"



The Press Office of the European Inter-University Centre of Human Rights and Democratisation ([EIUC](#)) / Global Campus of Human Rights organised today the press conference: *"Human rights violations against*

*the Yazidi community by the Islamic State (IS)” with the presence of **Lamya Haji Bashar 2016 Sakharov Prize Laureate awarded by the European Parliament.***

Other important speakers at the press conference were: **Letitia Anderson**, Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; **Manfred Nowak**, EIUC Secretary General; **Kalliope Agapiou-Josephydes**, Professor at the University of Cyprus.

Lamya Haji Bashar is a survivor of sexual enslavement by Islamic State (IS) and has become a spokesperson for women afflicted by IS's campaign of sexual violence. She is a public advocate for the Yazidi community in Iraq, a religious minority that has been the subject of a genocidal campaign by IS militants. Introducing Haji Bashar, Manfred Nowak said: *“She’s standing up and fighting for the yazidi community, courageous enough to tell the world the atrocities committed against women and children”*.

During the press conference, she answered questions about the suffering of the women and children under ISIS captivity, the reasons behind the attacks to Yazidi people, the enslavement of the women and children and the killing of the men in her community. She also explained the terrible conditions of the Yazidi, and what is the current situation of the liberated victims in the refugee camps. She highlighted how to defend the rights of those victims and to establish justice and equality. **Haji Bashar stated:** *“ISIS wanted to make us slaves, deprived of human values and dignity, but we are still here, still strong, and to the men I say: we will stay firm and even stronger”*.

“There wouldn’t be human rights without human rights defenders”, Letitia Anderson, Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; *“I’m grateful that the UN declared a war against the culture of silence on sexual violence during conflicts”*, Kalliope Agapiou-Josephydes, Professor at the University of Cyprus.

Lamya Haji Bashar seeks justice through the International Criminal Court, *“We need to collect all of our powers to defend human rights together”*.

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