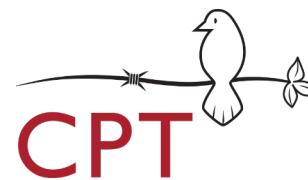


19 October 2022



## **KURDISH REFUGEES FROM IRAN ARE NOW DISPLACED IN IRAQI KURDISTAN**

On September 28, 2022, the Iranian military launched approximately 70 missiles on three refugee camps in Koya city in Iraqi Kurdistan. These camps were established for Iranian Kurds in 1995 who fled from their hometowns in eastern Kurdistan due to the Iranian regime's oppression to three refugee camps near Koya in Iraqi Kurdistan. Approximately 600 families were living in the camps before September 28. Now the camps have been evacuated and the families are displaced.

The Iranian authorities' excuse for bombing the camps is the presence of Kurdish opposition groups. Iran accuses these parties of being behind the current protests taking place in Kurdistan and Iran. The protests started after the death of Zhina Amini, the 22 years old Kurdish woman who was arrested in Tehran. Police beat Amini into a coma while she was in custody, she then died from her injuries in a hospital.

On October 12, members of Community Peacemaker Teams met with some of the displaced families in Koya. One mother, Asrin, told the team about what happened. The first four bombings occurred at 10:30 a.m. More bombings occurred from approximately 1:30 to 3:15 p.m.

Asrin's children were in school during the bombings. Sarina, her daughter in 9th grade, was in class when the bombings began. She explained, "We were listening to a lecture from our teacher about human rights while the bombings happened."

Asrin lamented that the children are terrified and traumatized by the bombings and often cannot sleep. She and other parents are most concerned for the safety of their children. In addition to protection for their children, they want their children to have access to education and mental health care.

Since the September 28 bombings, 280 students and 30 teachers are unable to return to school. The Directory of Education in Koya is responsible for providing a building for a school in Koya. A teacher told the team that the school was supposed to open on October 12, but it is unclear whether students will return to school anytime soon due to security reasons and the lack of protection for the students.

The displaced families are now living in rental houses in Koya. They face discrimination from neighbors and financial hardship as several families live together in one house. Families are worried about their children's future, who are now living with trauma.

No local or international humanitarian organizations have visited the displaced refugee families. The Kurdistan Regional Government also has not visited the families.

CPT is deeply concerned about the situation of hundreds of families and their children in Koya. We are calling on the international community, humanitarian aid organizations, and local authorities to respond to the urgent requests of these civilians.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Iraqi government must use its diplomatic methods to communicate with the Iranian government to stop bombing Iraqi Kurdistan and respect Iraq's sovereignty.**
- **The Kurdistan Regional Government ensures that students have access to education.**
- **Local and international organizations must visit the families and provide psychotherapy for children impacted by the bombings.**