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The Identity Struggle of the Kakai Minority in Iraq

Solaf Muhammed Amin Kakai

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The Identity Struggle of the Kakai Minority in Iraq

Solaf Muhammed Amin Kakai

Summary

Article 14 of the Permanent Iraqi Constitution of 2005 states 'Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, origin, colour, religion, sect, belief or creed, or economic or social status'. Countries create laws to ensure this freedom, such as the Kurdistan Region Law (5) of 2015 known as the "Protection of the Rights of the Components of Iraqi Kurdistan Law" on minority rights (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2018).

This research, which is a product of five focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with members of the Kakai minority group in the village of Safiya, Iraq between 6th November and 12th December 2021, tackles a very important issue, discrimination, which is a violation of international and constitutional principles of equality. The Kakai experience racial and religious discrimination in Iraq because they differ from the majority in some of their cultural characteristics. This research also explores another axis of inequality in examining gendered discrimination against Kakai women, interpersonal discrimination in the community among neighbours, institutional discrimination within education and the workplace, media bias, and legal discrimination in the laws, decisions, and instructions that are publicised to citizens.

This paper explores the stories and life experiences of Iraqi Kakais in their own words. There is a scarcity of literature on the Kakai minority in Iraq (Abas, Jaff and Karami, 2021), so this research is unique in its focus not only on the Kakai people but specifically on the challenges Kakai women encounter within their society at various levels, because of both their religious and gender identities.

Key words: Kakais, women, religious minority, marginality, gender discrimination, Iraq, participatory research.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Kakai

The first population study which captured the national and religious backgrounds of the different communities in Iraq was conducted by the Center for Cultural Training and Development of the Public Security Directorate. It was based on the results of the comprehensive population census of 1977. The study explored the geographical distribution of religious groups according to the governorates, trends in population growth among religious groups between 1947 and 1977, and the religious composition of the population of the provinces by nationality - that is, the distribution of religious minorities within each province based on their national affiliation (Al-Khayoun 2007).

In the 1987 census, conducted during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the form included two fields referring to the Iraqi either as Arab or Kurdish. These were expected to be inclusive of Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Yazidi minorities. Those who rejected either of the two options were punished by deprivation of the right to Iraqi citizenship (The New Humanitarian, 2005).

The last population census was in 1995 and did not include the three Kurdish provinces (Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah) because they were outside the jurisdiction of the Iraqi government from 1991.¹

In all cases, the Kakais were not counted among the national or religious groups. Instead they were counted among the Muslim groups based on the civil status identity register, which does not provide an option to identify as Kakai.

1.1.1 Constitutional, legal and political background

The Kakai minority have never been mentioned in any of the iterations of the constitution of the Iraqi state, from the first constitution (The Basic Law of 1925) to the permanent Iraqi constitution of 2005 (Abas, Jaff and Karami, 2021: 147).

The Iraqi constitution of 2005 is the first to recognise minorities by name and stipulating their national, linguistic, religious and sectarian rights, following the end of the previous regime on April 9, 2003, under what is known as consensual democracy.² However, this democracy more closely resembles the sectarian quotas in force in Lebanon than a consensual democracy.³

The Law on the Protection of the Rights of Components in Iraqi Kurdistan No. 5 of 2015 is considered the first legal document that recognises the rights of the Kakai minority, naming Kakais among the religious minorities stated in the second section of Article 1 of the law:

¹ Since 2005, legislative and provincial council elections have been conducted based on the data of the Ministry of Commerce in the ration card of the governorates for 2005, provided that an annual population growth rate of 2.8 per cent for each governorate is added, which is a speculation practiced in most Middle Eastern countries. First section of Article 1 of (Law Amending the Elections Law No. 16 of 2005), No. 26 of 2009, Al-Waqa'a Al-Iraqiya No. 4140, December 28, 2009.

² Iraqi politicians insist that what takes place when the government is formed is a consensual democracy, similar to the approach followed by the Swiss and Belgian governments according to the constitutional principle referred to by the Dutch researcher Arend Lijphart in his book *Democracy in Plural Societies*, translated by: Hosni Zeina, Beirut, Institute of Strategic Studies, First Edition, 2006.

³ Since 2003, the political process in Iraq has been taking place based on a sectarian quota system according to the distribution of the three main sovereign positions - the Presidency of the Council of the Republic, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Presidency of the House of Representatives - among the three components, the Kurds, Shi'ites and Sunnis, with some service ministries given to some components, each according to their population weight. The largest share belongs to the most numerous component, which is the Shi'ite component.

National groups: Turkmen, Chaldean Syriac, Assyrians and Armenians, and religious and sectarian groups: Christianity, Yazidis, Sabeen Mandaean, Kakai, Shabak, Faili, Zoroastrian and other citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Kakai are present in the ranks of the political parties of various national and ideological orientations, both right and left, such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Movement for Change, the New Generation Movement, the Communist Party of Kurdistan, Kurdistan Workers' Party, the Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party, the People's Party as well as other Kurdish political parties.

However, problems arose politically after 2003, when some people started calling for positive discrimination in favour of the Kakai minority by allocating a quota seat in the Iraqi Parliament and the Kurdistan Region Parliament, similar to those granted to the Turkmen, Christian and Yazidi minorities. This coincided with the governments' demand for the Kakai sect to define its identity, and the basis on which the quota would be granted to it. Divisions within the Kakai emerged at this point. Some believed that the Kakai are a Kurdish minority with a religious specificity, without declaring the nature of this specificity. Others believed that the Kakai are a minority of the Shi'ite Muslim community, or close to the Shi'ite sect.

Some influential parties in Iraq moved to solidify the Kakai as a minority in the Shi'ite community to establish a quota, appointing young people within the ranks of the Popular Mobilization Forces (Shi'ite armed factions) in Kirkuk and other areas outside the Kurdistan Region, taking advantage of the deteriorating economic situation of the population in those areas.

This was in addition to integrating the shrines and holy sites of this component - in areas outside the Kurdistan Region - and including them into the Shi'ite endowment, which is considered to represent a fusion of the Kakai component within the Shi'ite doctrine.

Others felt the Kakai are a different Muslim minority in terms of race/ethnicity from the Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens. This understanding is risky for the Kakai because Kurdistan plays a major role in protecting Kurdish components with cultural peculiarities, including the Kakai community.

The regional government has supported the participation of minorities in state institutions since 1991, whether through a quota - a system of positive discrimination -

or by ensuring the diversity and the interculturality of the Kurdish religious and ethnic groups. In this way, the Kakai have trusted that its political participation was guaranteed.

However, from 2003, the Kakais' demands for their rights increased in Kurdish regions that are administratively subordinate to the governorates of Mosul, Kirkuk and Diyala. This is because the Kakai minority in these areas deemed it necessary to regulate matters constitutionally and legally, like other minorities. These governorates are covered by Article 140 of the Permanent Iraqi Constitution of 2005, which stipulates taking three steps regarding disputed areas: 'Normalization, Census and finally a referendum in Kirkuk and other disputed areas to determine the will of their citizens' no later than 31 December 2007 (Saeed, 2017).

However, unfortunately the Kakai are still not recognised in the Iraqi constitution and there are ongoing debates within the Kakai community about the role of secrecy in inviting further harm. Some believe that it is necessary to reveal more about their culture, beliefs and practices in order to gain legal and political rights (Abas, Jaff and Karami, 2021:156).

1.1.2 The historical background

The history of the Kakai is disputed. Some researchers link the Kurdish word "Kaka", which means older brother, and the futuwwa organization, which means brotherhood known during the Abbasid Islamic era. Other researchers object to this association between the Arab futuwwa and the Kurdish Kakai (Al-Khayoun 2007). As there are few sources to draw on for the historical background of the Kakai, this paper draws extensively on the work Rashid Al-Kayoun.

British intelligence reported that the Kakais were originally a Sufi sect, a Darwsheh, both in terms of organisation and social origin. Its founder is Sultan bin Ishaq Al-Barzanji, and the shrine of Sultan Ishaq is still a Kakai shrine on Mount Horaman (*ibid*: 465). The British labelled the Kakai as a sect of ambiguous doctrine, present in and around Kirkuk. As a result of this ambiguity, their existence was not mentioned by writers and historians. In some cases, they are considered among the group that deify Imam Ali or People of the Truth (*ibid*: 466-467), while in fact the Kakai are quite different from them.

While there is little information about the origin of the Kakai, especially from a religious perspective, they have religious books written in the Kurdish language⁴. They also have many shrines, including: the Shrine of Sultan Ishaq in Mount Horaman, the Shrine of Sayyid Ibrahim in Baghdad, Dukkan-e Daud, the Shrine of Zain al-Abidin in Daquq, the Shrine of Ahmed in the Musalla in Kirkuk, and the Shrine of Omar Mandan in Kifri (Al-Kahyoun 2007: 470).

Some historians consider that Kakatism (or Yarsanism, as it is sometimes known) is nothing but an extension of a mystical path, which was established by Amr Ibn Lahab in the 8th century AD (Salloum 2013). Others link it to the Shi'ite sect due to the similarities such as the sanctification of Imam Ali. Kakatism is also influenced by other religions, such as Islam, Christianity and Yazidism.

Kakatism is surrounded by an air of mystery and secrecy due to a lack of explanation of their beliefs, rituals and practices. This is in addition to Kakais' civil status registration as Muslim; a practice which invisibilises⁵ them.

Under the weight of persecution and marginalisation within a society with an Islamic majority, the Kakai were forced to assimilate some of their customs, ideas and values in order to ensure their religious and social existence and avoid harm or persecution that would threaten their survival. This has ultimately led to more ambiguity and complexity surrounding the Kakai religion.

1.1.3 The location of the Kakai

The Kakai minority lives within the Kurdish regions of Iraq, namely the governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, and Halabja, with a small minority in Dohuk. There are also Kakais in the Ramadi governorate, who are originally from Kirkuk and deported by the Iraqi government before 2003. The aim of their displacement was to change the demographics of the Kurdish-majority city of Kirkuk, as the Iraqi government considered the Kakais to be Kurds. The Kakais were therefore settled in the provinces with a Sunni

⁴ Macho is the dialect used by the Kakai in their communications and conversations. It is a dialect close in vocabulary to the Horami dialect, which is one of the Kurdish languages, in addition to Sorani, Korani and Kurmanji.

⁵ The processes of making someone, or a group of people, invisible within society, be that refusing to name them explicitly or creating a situation where they are unable to exert any power over their lives. Herzog (2018) understands invisibilisation (and silencing) to be processes which lead to exclusion and marginalisation, where individuals or groups are made to be considered irrelevant, either in communication or in general discourse.

majority, and Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs were put in their place. The Arab settlers were also granted furnished apartments, cars, jobs in state departments, and 10,000 Iraqi dinars. Hence, the name the "Ten Thousand Group" in the Iraqi dialect, meaning the migrant Arabs who obtained these privileges. The aim of this name was to distinguish the Arab settlers from the original Arabs of the city of Kirkuk, who are deemed the real owners of the land.

The deportation campaigns continued for a long time and did not cease despite Iraq's involvement in two wars that drained the country's resources and energies: the war with Iran (1980–1988), and the war against the multi-national forces following their occupation of Kuwait on 2nd August 1990.

At the end of the 1990s, the Iraqi government's strategy towards the Kakais and the Kurds in general in Kirkuk changed. It started distributing 'nationality change forms', in which the Kurdish citizen had the option of either being deported from the city of Kirkuk or changing their nationality to Arab. This came in addition to preventing Kakais and Kurds from giving their children Kurdish names.

However, after 2003, the Kakai majority in the city of Ramadi and other cities in the central and southern governorates of Iraq returned to their original homes, either voluntarily, out of their own desire to return, or by force due to sectarian conflicts because of their targeting by extremist groups.

1.1.4 The limits of the Kakai presence

Sources indicate that the borders of the Kakai land are as follows: to the south, the plain extending north of Hamrin and Qara Dagħ, to the east the main road between Taza and Tuz Khurmatu, and to the west the Hawija region. They also have a presence in Tal Afar in the Mosul governorate (Al-Khayoun 2007: 471). Kakais tend to live in villages located within the Kurdish regions (Al-Azzawi 1949: 36-39).

1.2 The position of Kakai women in society

Women in Middle Eastern societies experience marginalisation and neglect, regardless of their religious or sectarian affiliations. However, gender and membership of a religious minority can intersect to create different experiences of discrimination when compared to majority women (Tadros, 2020).

The pressure that a Kakai woman suffers is both internal and external. Internal pressures are associated with the men in her family who control her destiny, and may sometimes force her into marriage or exchange her into marriage for economic, social or political capital. This could include the marriage of young girls when they are infants or immediately after birth. External pressures include harassment from those in the majority religion, especially as Kakai women do not wear a veil (hijab) and are therefore identifiable as non-Muslim.

2 Goals of the research

This research aims to explore the types of discrimination that the Kakai are subjected to, with a specific focus on Kakai women, recognising that they experience a unique and compounded discrimination because of the intersection of their religious and gender identities. This research also aims to explore the origins of this discrimination at various levels, whether at the state level, through laws and decision making, or at the level of the environment, in which different religious and ethnic groups live and mingle with each other day-to-day, whether at school, university, work, in markets, or during celebrations, events and gatherings in public places.

Additionally, this research provides analysis and comparison of the conditions of the Kakai minority throughout the different periods of the Iraqi state, through their exposure to deportation and Arabisation during the rule of the former Baathist regime from 1963 - 2003, as well as the oppression during the period of sectarian fighting after 2003, all the way up to the ISIS attack on Iraq and the Levant in 2014.

2.1 Research methodology

Data were extrapolated from the opinions of focus group members, consisting of men and women, through the use of participatory ranking and semi-structured group discussion. Questions posed to the focus group members revolved around selected examples of the key challenges faced by women from the Kakai minority in their society. Participants had the opportunity to add other threats that they believed Kakai women are exposed to and all of these were written down in the list presented to them on the white board. Alongside identifying challenges affecting Kakai women, the male participants were also asked to identify challenges they face.

Participants then rated those challenges and threats according to their gravity and severity for each individual. The researcher also explored the motives behind the ranking of a challenge as more severe than others by listening to participants' stories and personal experience.

When analysing the data, both inductive and deductive approaches were used. Literature from reliable references and sources on the Kakai minority was analysed using an inductive approach, drawing themes from the text as they emerged. These themes then guided a deductive analysis of the focus group data, revealing specific challenges and threats faced by members of the Kakai minority in their geographical regions, or as a result of their contact with others from the majority religion.

2.2 Participant selection

The research sample of 60 people belonging to the Kakai minority was selected and divided into five focus groups, according to the parameters below:

Three focus group discussions (FGDs) for women, aged between 18-34 years (FGD 1), 35-45 years (FGD 2), and 46-70 years (FGD 3). Each of these focus groups had 12 participants.

Two focus groups for men, aged between 18-40 years (FGD 4) and 41-58 years (FGD 5). The first of these focus groups had 14 participants and the second had ten.

The 60 people in the research sample were chosen from among the residents of the village of Safiya, which has a Kakai majority. Focus groups were conducted from 6 November to 12 December 2021.

2.3 Study limitations, strengths and challenges

The significance of this research lies in the richness of the data collected. The experiences outlined in this report are captured in the participants' own words, giving a voice to members of a persecuted minority. This is particularly significant for the women involved, who are often further marginalised because of their gender.

This research coincided with the advent of the Kakai fasting and feast and the subsequent exchange of congratulations and blessings. These congratulations are

accompanied every year by congratulations at the governmental level by the Masrour Barzan, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechirvan Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region, and Masoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

This research also comes as the Kakai attempt to ensure their rights within the Draft Constitution of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, similar to the Kurdistan Region Law (5) of 2015, known as the "Protection of the Rights of the Components of Iraqi Kurdistan Law" (Abas, Jaff and Karami, 2021). Should this be achieved, it will be the first constitutional recognition of the Kakai in the history of the Iraqi state.

There were challenges in conducting this research. It was difficult to accommodate the focus group members - of both genders - when addressing a thorny and forbidden subject for them; the challenges and discrimination a person faces just because they are Kakai within a Muslim-majority community, and the discrimination Kakai women face, which includes discrimination from within their own community. These are seen to be deeply private topics.

Since their inception, the Kakai have been subjected to various types of discrimination, to the extent that it has become natural to them. They rarely argue or defend themselves with arguments or quote Quran verses tackling equality between all human beings, as in the sayings: 'You have your own religion, and I have mine', 'There is no compulsion in religion' or 'And made you into tribes and families so that you may know one another'. They are of the opinion that doctrinal disputes would fracture relations between them and their classmates, workmates, or neighbours. Others prefer to remain silent and discontinue the discussion, as they fear that their privacy will be violated. They prefer silence to delving into arguments where they believe the outcome will not be favourable towards them.

The first obstacle encountered was difficulty in convincing the participants of the need to specify the challenges they face in their lives in simple terms. There are many reasons for this, either due to a lack of literacy, or because they tend to write down detailed phrases with lengthy explanations. This is likely because these issues feel complex and come with extensive lived experience. Instead, the majority preferred to discuss each challenge individually and in detail, to share their stories and experiences.

This paper therefore relies upon the researcher's interpretation of the experiences shared during the FGDs when drawing out the challenges in simple terms, putting them sequentially according to what participants stated during the discussions, and writing them down on the white board. While this process was time-consuming, this research stays as true to the words and descriptions used by the Kakai participants where possible.

Secondly, the time allocated for discussions with members of the women's focus groups was a challenge. Married women take care of their children, sending them to school, preparing meals and managing all other household chores. It was therefore necessary to set a fixed time for them – 2 p.m. – to conduct the discussion for at least two hours. This meant the meeting would be concluded at around 4:30 p.m., at which point they would resume their daily routine of preparing dinner for their families as well as other household duties. Some women even brought their children with them since there was no one to look after them during those two hours of discussion with the rest of the focus group.

Lastly, participants were generally reluctant to identify any challenges they face. When asked whether they were discriminated against by others, at first they would say: 'No, we are fine, we are a peaceful people, we love others and we have no problem'. When I tried to explain what I meant by the question, or attempted to rephrase the question, they would answer saying: 'No, thank God there are no problems, I did not sense any discrimination, and so on'. However, they would then add, 'Honestly, sometimes I get ridiculed or mocked when they know I am a Kakai woman' or 'when they see my thick, long moustache and know I am a Kakai man'.

The main reason for the contradiction in the statements of the focus group members is that they do not understand the fact that they have been subjected to discrimination. They do not consider what they are going through to be discrimination against them, which distorts their personal freedom and constitutional rights.

Issues such as bullying, harassment, ridicule, mockery, obscene and offensive words, insulting sanctities, accusations of dishonour or blasphemy, incitement and other aspects of discrimination are considered normal for the Kakai. For them, such matters should not be spoken about so to avoid escalation into violence.

3 Research findings

3.1 Participatory ranking findings

The following tables show the final priority lists from each FGD alongside tables aggregating the women’s rankings and men’s rankings. The individual priority lists for each person can be found in Appendix One.

Table 1: Challenges faced by Kakai women of all ages

Challenges	Prioritisation by Kakai women					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Education	24	4	2	1	3	1st
Gender discrimination	2	14	5	2	5	2nd
Displacement due to ISIS	0	1	6	3	26	3rd
Poverty	3	1	1	0	1	4th
Bullying within the clan	1	0	1	1	8	5th
Invasion of privacy	0	0	3	0	8	6th

Bullying/ harassment	1	0	0	1	9	7th
Superstitions and myths	0	1	0	2	7	8th
Discrimination at work	0	1	1	2	1	9th
Forced Marriage	0	0	0	1	3	10th

Source: Authors' own.

The table above presents the ten challenges identified by Kakai women in the first three FGDs. As shown in the following tables, not all of these challenges were identified by all of the women across the three FGDs, however there were clear similarities, such as education, gender discrimination and displacement due to ISIS.

The second column of this table shows the number of participants who voted for the identified challenge as their top priority issue. Likewise, the third column shows how many voted for each challenge as the second most important issue, etc. The final column shows the ranking of these issues based on the total figure generated when the votes for each issue are weighted appropriately.⁶

The following tables show how the differently aged women in each of the FGDs voted on the challenges they identified, and each table is structured in the same way.

⁶ The weighting was calculated using the following equation: total = (number of votes for 1st place*5)+(number of votes for second place*4)+(number of votes for 3rd place*3)+(number of votes for 4th place*2)+(number of votes for fifth place*1).

Table 2: Challenges faced by women aged 18 - 34 years (FGD 1)

Challenges	Prioritisation by women aged 18 - 34					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Education	9	1	1	1	-	1st
Gender discrimination	2	6	-	1	-	2nd
Displacement due to ISIS	-	-	3	-	9	3rd
Discrimination at work	-	1	1	2	1	4th
Bullying within the clan	-	-	1	1	2	5th
Forced marriage	-	-	-	1	3	6th

Source: Authors' own.

Table 3: Challenges faced by women aged 35 - 45 years (FGD 2)

Challenges	Prioritisation by women aged 35 - 45					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Education	4	3	1	-	2	1st
Poverty	3	1	1	-	1	2nd
Gender discrimination	-	1	4	1	4	3rd
Displacement due to ISIS	-	1	1	2	8	4th
Bullying within the clan	1	-	-	-	6	5th

Source: Authors' own.

Table 4: Challenges faced by women aged 46 - 70 years (FGD 3)

Challenges	Prioritisation by women aged 46 - 70					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Education	11	-	-	-	1	1st
Gender discrimination	-	7	1	-	1	2nd
Invasion of privacy	-	-	3	-	8	3rd
Displacement due to ISIS	-	-	2	1	9	4th
Bullying/harassment	1	-	-	1	9	5th
Superstitions and myths	-	1	-	2	7	6th

Source: Authors' own.

Table 5: Challenges faced by Kakai men of all ages

Challenges	Prioritisation by Kakai men					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Invasion of privacy	4	6	1	2	11	1st
Discrimination at work	5	2	1	2	11	2nd
Displacement due to ISIS	1	1	5	4	13	3rd
Bullying/harassment	1	4	1	3	15	4th
Superstitions and myths	-	1	3	2	15	5th
Displacement before 2003	3	1	2	2	2	6th
Displacement after 2003	-	3	1	2	4	7th

Source: Authors' own.

Table 6: Challenges faced by men aged 18 - 40 years (FGD 4)

Challenges	Prioritisation by men aged 18 - 40					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Invasion of privacy	2	4	-	2	6	1st
Displacement due to ISIS	1	1	2	3	7	2nd
Bullying/harassment	-	2	1	1	10	3rd
Discrimination at work	2	1	-	1	7	4th
Superstitions and myths	-	1	2	1	8	5th

Source: Authors' own.

Table 7: Challenges faced by men aged 41 - 58 years (FGD 5)

Challenges	Prioritisation by men aged 41 – 58					Final ranking
	No. of votes for 1st place	No. of votes for 2nd place	No. of votes for 3rd place	No. of votes for 4th place	No. of votes for a ranking of 5 th or lower	
Displacement before 2003	3	1	2	2	2	1st
Discrimination at work	3	1	1	1	4	2nd
Invasion of privacy	2	2	1	-	5	3rd
Displacement after 2003	-	3	1	2	4	4th
Bullying/harassment	1	2	-	2	5	5th
Displacement due to ISIS	-	-	3	1	6	6th
Superstitions and myths	-	-	1	1	7	7th

Source: Authors' own.

Table 8: A comparison of the women's and men's rankings

	Ranking for women	Ranking for men	Aggregate ranking for both men and women
1st	Education	Invasion of privacy	Education
2nd	Gender discrimination	Discrimination at work	Displacement due to ISIS
3rd	Displacement due to ISIS	Displacement due to ISIS	Gender discrimination
4th	Poverty	Bullying/harassment	Invasion of privacy
5th	Bullying within the clan	Superstitions and myths	Discrimination at work
6th	Invasion of privacy	Displacement before 2003	Bullying/harassment
7th	Bullying/harassment	Displacement after 2003	Superstitions and myths
8th	Superstitions and myths		Displacement before 2003
9th	Discrimination at work		Poverty
10th	Forced marriage		Displacement after 2003
11th			Bullying within the clan
12th			Forced marriage

Source: Authors' own.

As outlined in the above tables, there were differences between the issues identified by the different focus groups and the way they were ranked. For example, there are gaps in the above table because each FGD identified a different number of threats and challenges facing them. In terms of differences, the most significant were between the threats and challenges identified by the women and the men. For example, education was overwhelmingly the most significant challenge identified by the women, but it didn't feature in the lists generated by the men. The analysis of these similarities, differences and the comparative lived experiences of the participants follows below.

3.2 Discussion and analysis

Table 9: List of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
F	Female
M	Male
E	Erbil
S	Safiya
H	Hamdaniya
KH	Khabat
HW	Housewife
ST	Student
S&T	Student and Tailor
T	Teacher
GI	Graduate of an Institute
W	Worker
RM	Retired from the military (Pêşmerge)
VS	Vegetable Seller

Source: Authors' own.

By listening to the stories of the participants in the focus groups, both men and women, we determined a number of threats/challenges faced by the Kakai due to religion and gender. Within the second (35-45 years) and third group (46-68 years), there were women in their thirties all the way up to their sixties. Among them were women who did not have any opportunities for formal education. They lamented their situation and regretted their lost dreams of having a brighter future, as they believed that if they had been educated, they would have been in a better situation.

According to their testimonies, their parents used to send the boys, not the girls, to school, arguing that girls are not to receive education, because educating girls was perceived to be improper.

The first focus group members were younger (18-34 years). The group included two women who could not read. One of them did not go to school, and the other had left school at an early age.

Women in this group believed that the condition of Kakai women has changed dramatically for the better. There are many families that now send their daughters to school and even allow them to complete their studies until they reach university level. The reason for this is that there are schools for all stages of education in villages and rural areas, in addition to ease of transportation and communication between the village and the sub-districts. They stated that the issue of exchange marriages (where a woman is married in exchange for her leaving employment) or the marriage of young girls has become rare.

However, members of the first FGD felt discrimination by the majority started at school, where peers attempted to talk Kakais into wearing the veil or started conversations that sought to delve into details about their worship, rituals, customs, etc. This led Kakais to feel isolated or to withdraw from others to avoid discussing religious issues, or to only sit with other Kakai in cafeterias, during school and university trips and other occasions.

Conversely, members of the second and third FGDs did not recognise this kind of discrimination, since they do not leave the house often, or if they do, they go out with the male of the household - the father, brother, husband or son, and the man is the one who leads conversations and discussions. What they suffer most is the mocking of men's moustaches and the uttering of offensive or degrading words or jokes about the long

and thick moustache of Kakai men on the bus, in the market and in other public places. They are exposed to the painful rejection of their food by their Muslim neighbours, although they kindly accept everything that is sent to them.

Moreover, they try to pretend in front of their neighbours that they are fasting during Ramadan, by entering the house at the time of breaking the fast or getting up during the pre-dawn meal (Suhoor) and making some noise, so that their Muslim neighbours hear that their Kakai neighbours are awake. Nevertheless, the women realised that these attempts to hide their identity and mimic another religion do not work, because their Muslim neighbours know the truth about them having rituals and ceremonies of their own and are not convinced by their acting and their attempts to conceal their reality.

The following sections explore each of the challenges identified by the Kakai women in more detail, comparing and contrasting the differing views across and within the FGDs.

3.2.1 Education

Education sat at the top of all three of the priority lists generated by the women in the FGDs, demonstrating its significance as a barrier for Kakai women. For example, of the 12 participants in the first FGD of women aged 18 - 34, nine were deprived of education by their parents because of their gender. In the second focus group (women aged 35 - 45), ten of the 12 participants declared education to be a great challenge for them, with eight of them having been forced to leave school. In the third FGD (women aged 46 - 70), education was the biggest threat for eleven of the 12 women. Across the three FGDs, the women had examples to share of how their parents had stopped them from going to school, or cut their education short, because they were girls:

I was deprived of many things and suffered a lot. That is why I hate boys, my brothers. I suffered from the difference, i.e. discrimination. You are a girl, so you do not leave the house, you do not read/learn, I was deprived of education.

(Participant F 20 HW KH, Single)

I don't know how to write...We didn't have an older brother at home...Our economic conditions were very rough. So they took us out of school, so that we could work for a living. We were six girls, and when my brother grew up, he went to school, but we are four sisters now who do not know how to read or write.

(Participant F 44 HW S, Married)

This second example demonstrates how even when discrimination isn't directly the factor for keeping girls out of school, there may be additional economic barriers, and girls are still the ones who suffer. It is often believed that education is improper for girls:

In villages they say that it is a shame for girls to study and learn. This is a girl. It is improper and shameful for her to go to school.

(Participant F 38 HW KH, Married)

I was deprived of education, because the Kakai do not allow girls to study. We were in Mosul. They asked how I would travel such long distances!

(Participant F 49 HW KH, Married)

In addition to this overt gender discrimination, participants identified various reasons Kakai parents give to prevent girls and women from receiving an education. Within the first FGD, one of these reasons provided was that girls were forced to leave school in order to be married off at an early age:

When I went to school, my family used to ask me to go late, while my brother, who was with me in the same school, would go early. As for me, I had to go late, after him, because they wanted make sure I arrive at the time when the lesson begins. So, when I go to school, I must immediately sit at my desk and start my lessons. And the goal is that I would not get busy talking to others, particularly boys, because the school was mixed (boys and girls). I had to return home earlier than my brother, who was often late to return home. I could not stay with my friends for a little while to chat or stop at a store or a shop to buy sweets, as I would get beaten by my brothers. If I returned a little late or if I stopped at a certain grocery store to buy a certain thing, I would eat it in secret, because if they knew about it they would beat me and say how can a girl go to the store. When I asked them about the reason for this discriminatory treatment between me and my young brothers, they used to say, "You are a girl, it is a shame that you do such and such, it is not correct because you are a girl".

(Participant F 27 HW S, Married)

Even for girls who were allowed to attend school, they might not have been allowed to study at a higher, university level. Parents were said to avoid this possibility by marrying off girls while they were still at school, so that the husband would have the power to make them continue or discontinue their education for whatever reason:

Last year I was in the sixth grade of middle school. I had class which I had to be examined for in the second term. Because of people's interference in our affairs and their inciting my husband to prevent me from continuing my education, he did not allow me to sit for the exam. Our financial situation is quite degraded, because my husband is a construction worker, so I was deprived of education.
(Participant F 22 HW S, Married)

Additionally, participants discussed how poverty means that the villages they live in do not have schools for girls:

I was deprived of education. I studied until the fourth grade of primary school. Then, left school due to the deteriorating economic conditions.
(Participant F 38 HW KH, Married)

In fact, the participants' perceptions were that sometimes the Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime deliberately deported Kurdish families to areas where there were no schools, so that an ignorant generation would emerge, not knowing how to read or write.

Interestingly, one of the women in the third FGD also identified how ethno-religious discrimination kept girls out of school alongside gender discrimination:

We used to live in Al Abbas in Diyala governorate. I was forced to leave school after finishing the sixth grade of primary school, because they said, "You are Kakai and our region is Arab. They will abuse you." That is why I gave up on my education.
(Participant F 49 HW S, Married)

In contrast, some of the women considered a lack of education for girls to be a normal issue considering the period in which they lived, identifying it as something girls in the majority also faced:

In the seventies and eighties, the issue of girls not going to school was a normal thing, because the majority did not send their daughters to school, that is why this did not affect me.

(Participant F 53 HW S)

3.2.2 Gender discrimination

As with education, gender discrimination was only identified as a challenge and threat in the women's FGDs. In fact, it featured as the second priority for women in FGDs one (aged 18 - 34) and three (aged 46 - 70), and third in the second FGD (aged 35 - 45). In total, across all three FGDs, 28 of the 36 participants, confirmed that they had been discriminated against because of their gender, by parents and/or male relatives.

One of the women in the second focus group expressed frustration that there is a stark difference in the respect afforded to women in comparison to men in Kakai society:

I have a question: Why is respect for men greater than respect for women? Women also have rights. Why can a man move freely and speak freely? Why can a man go out whenever he wishes? It is true that women have their status and respect, but why does the man enjoy a greater share of respect? [...] Even when a woman makes a mistake, even if it is not great, and while the man also makes mistakes, it is said that the man is a man. However, a woman is criticised when she commits a mistake, no matter what its size is!

(Participant F 40 HW S, Married)

Many of the women, particularly those aged 18 - 34, emphasised how they were discriminated against by their parents. They described how they were prevented from studying or working for the purpose of restricting their freedom of moving outside the house, contrary to the wide range of freedoms granted to their brothers:

I feel this discrimination within my family. The boy is free in his movements and can return late at night, but the girl cannot do that.

(Participant F 31 E HW, Married)

My father did not allow me to receive education, but my brothers were allowed. Because I was the eldest daughter in the house, and he did not have children

older than me, he deprived me of an education, so that I would work in the field with him...I signed away my right of inheritance to my male brothers, and they gave me little in return for my relinquishment.

(Participant F 41 HW S, Widow)

This second example shows how discrimination against Kakai women is passed down through generations. Discrimination carried out by parents is compounded by discrimination by younger male relatives, such as brothers. Discrimination may even be practiced by the son over his mother:

There are men who do not respect their mothers, just because they are women. I notice this phenomenon among those who are close to me, how a boy does not respect his mother and does not esteem her just because she is a woman.

(Participant F 27 HW S, Married)

Another of the women, from the third FGD, expressed how even the threat of ethno-religious discrimination didn't stop her brothers' freedoms being curtailed, whereas her movement was restricted:

My brothers used to enjoy freedom of movement and going around even among the Arabs.

(Participant F 49 HW S, Married)

The women also explained how discrimination is even seen in the ability to own things, such as mobile phones:

I am discriminated against within my family...They discriminate between me and my brother at home. For example, they buy a mobile phone for the boy and they don't do the same for me, telling me that I shouldn't have one.

(Participant F 18 HW KH, Single)

Outside the family, participants identified how discrimination is also exercised through the law:

The man kills his wife, is not punished, but is rather released with the help of his parents or sometimes even his wife's parents. He committed a crime, so why not be punished? Why this injustice? Sometimes the girl would be killed by her

cousin. His uncle, the victim's father, would release his criminal nephew from prison, either for clan considerations such as reconciliation or settlements, and also because women are not of much significance.... Parents of the murdered girl/woman would concede, so the criminal who killed their daughter would be released.

(Participant F 24 HW S, Married)

3.2.3 Displacement due to ISIS

All participants across all five FGDs were subjected to migration and displacement to escape the ISIS armed factions in Iraq and the Levant in 2014, although two of the women in the second FGD (aged 35 - 45) didn't mention this as a challenge they face. Participants recognised that they were at risk at that time due to their dual religious minority and Kurdish identities.

When ISIS took control of Mosul, we felt more afraid. The reason for our fleeing from our homeland was because we, like the Yazidis and Christians, are different from Muslims. Since its onset, ISIS was spreading statements, like: "If you fall in our hands, we will slaughter you or cut off your heads, because you are infidels, because you are Kakai." So, we were afraid of them because we are different from Muslims, who consider us to be infidels only because we are Kakais.

(Participant F 24 HW S, Single)

After 2005 and 2006 persecution was practiced against us in Mosul, because we were exposed to killing or threats of killing because of our Kurdish identity, as we provided food to the Pêşmerge military, and so, we were threatened...because we are Kurdish...we moved and left Mosul and came to the Kurdistan Region.

(Participant M 32 GI KH)

While none of the participants identified different ways in which Kakai men and women were at risk during this period of displacement, one of the women from the third FGD (aged 46 - 70) detailed feeling fearful of experiencing the same violence as the Yazidis, many of whom were women who were kidnapped and enslaved by ISIS.

As soon as we heard about the possibility of ISIS arriving, we fled from Safiya, since we heard what they had done to the Yazidis. We said that worse things

would happen to us than what happened to them. When they get hold of Kakais, they will surely not let them live...They will kill us and assault us.

(Participant F 53 HW S)

Participants discussed how displacement included fleeing from bombs, attacks on their homes and the threat of violence. Whole villages were evacuated.

We fled from Safiya to Erbil after the ISIS attack in 2014. We were bombed...Our windows were smashed. We were close to the ISIS attack where our homes were destroyed.

(Participant F 41 HW S, Widow)

We were subjected to displacement and deportation, and we were deported in 2014 to escape from ISIS. The village was completely evacuated.

(Participant M 27 W S)

Some of the participants described being displaced and deported more than once, and for different reasons each time. They explained how the Kakai people have been historically vulnerable to discrimination because of their religion and nationality, and the invasion from ISIS was one more instance of this violence:

We were subjected to displacement and deportation several times, since we were bombed during the rule of President Saddam in 1991 for political reasons, because we are Kurds. So, they considered us Kurds...In 2014, due to the fact that ISIS was carrying out these actions in the name of the Islamic State, we, the Kakai, as well as all the components and all the minorities...They had an impact at most on the minorities. The components no longer had a place here.

(Participant M 40 W S)

We were subjected to migration several times: By the Baathist regime in 1988, when we were given the choice between changing our nationality or emigrating. We were in Mosul, so we chose deportation and did not change our nationality...In 1991, we returned to our original place in Hamdaniya, but our homes were completely demolished. Also, in 2014, we fled from ISIS.

(Participant M 43 W H)

Unfortunately, displacement of the Kakai people did not start with ISIS. In fact, there were two challenges related to displacement identified by the men in the fifth FGD (aged 41 - 58) that weren't mentioned by the women - these were displacement before 2003 and displacement after 2003 (but before ISIS).

All ten male FGD members were subjected to displacement under the Baathist regime (1979 - 2003) because of their Kurdish identity. The former regime deported Kakai families from their original place of residence in Kirkuk, Mosul and Erbil under what is known as the Arab belt, i.e. changing the demographics of Kurdish provinces populated by a Kurdish-majority.

The Kakais were considered to be among the Kurdish component. That is why they were subjected to deportation from their original areas of residence in Kirkuk to the Ramadi governorate in Western Iraq, or to the governorates of the Kurdistan Region, such as Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

At the end of the 1990s, this minority was subjected to Arabisation by forcing them to change their nationality from Kurdish to Arab in order to influence the demographic structure. The decisions of "Nationality Correction" (Jambaz 2008: 80) issued by the Revolutionary Command Council, and the distribution of "Nationality Correction" forms (*ibid.*: 32, 104, 106) to citizens, state: 'Please kindly agree to correct my nationality fromnationality to Arab nationality'.

According to the Revolutionary Command Council Resolution No. 199/2001, everyone who turned 18 years of age had the right to change their nationality to Arab nationality. The deportation of the Kakai, for nationalistic considerations and the correction of their nationality, had the largest share, as it constitutes a significant population weight in Kirkuk and Mosul.

We were subjected to migration twice, once during Saddam's era, i.e. before 2003, when we were in Mosul, and we came here - to Safiya village - and we were displaced once more because of ISIS in 2014.

(Participant M 41 W S)

The Kakai minority in Mosul were forced to flee and leave their original residence after being exposed to killing or being threatened. This is similar to what other minorities, such as Yazidis and Christians, faced through the Sunni armed factions, since the latter carried the banner of opposition to the new Iraqi government and to everything that is American and foreign. These attitudes were associated with Al-Qaeda, so brought criticism and violence from the majority government.

We were exposed to displacement several times, during the Baath era, and later after the fall of the Baath regime in 2003. We were in Mosul, we have been displaced since then. Also in 2014 because of ISIS.

(Participant M 45 W S)

3.2.4 Poverty

While poverty was only mentioned by the women in the second FGD (ages 35 - 45), three of these women placed it as the top challenge facing them as Kakai women. In total, six of these women mentioned the poor economic situation of their families and its impact on the course of their lives, depriving them of education and other opportunities:

I studied until the fourth grade of primary school, but I dropped out of school due to our poor living conditions...My brothers went to school, but also dropped out due to the rough economic conditions.

(Participant F 38 HW KH)

As already explored in the education section, when economic conditions are poor, it is often the girls and women who have opportunities removed first, such as education. However, in this instance, the participant was clear that the economic situation was so bad that even her brother had to drop out of school alongside her. These women also discussed how their children are deprived of educational opportunities because of poverty:

My 14-year-old daughter threw herself off the roof due to poverty. She asked for new clothes, and we could not buy them for her. My children went to school, but dropped out due to the deteriorating economic conditions.

(Participant F 45 HW S)

3.2.5 Bullying within the clan

Bullying within the clan was identified as a threat and challenge by women in the first and second FGDs (aged 18 - 34 and 35 - 45). The 12 participants in the first FGD confirmed that they were victims of bullying and gossip by members of the same clan, but only three of them chose this as a negative point that represents a challenge to them:

Sometimes neighbours, relatives, and those around me talk behind my back and criticise my work and my profession, and attack me in their conversations. Hypocrisy is widespread among people, so they would appear one way before me and stab me with their words behind my back.

(Participant F 27 HW S Married)

Within the second group, seven of the participants confirmed being bullied by the residents of their village:

Sometimes I would hear the words, but I would neglect them, and I submit my affairs to God. This happened in our village. All residents of my village are Kakai.

(Participant A37 HW S)

This example shows how Kakai women experience discrimination from within their community, not only from those outside or from an opposing clan. Sometimes, this does not stop at bullying, verbal abuse, or discrimination, but may even extend to graver issues:

My husband was kidnapped in Mosul by ISIS in 2014, and what happened to him remains unknown until now, I lived with my husband's family for a while. Then, they announced his death, then the issue of money and inheritance was brought up. So, my husband's family expelled me and took my daughters to deprive me of my husband's inheritance. Because they think that I will take the money and spend it or give it to my family. The laws failed to do me justice despite my attorney, who failed to protect my rights because of the economic power and authority that my in-laws enjoy in the region.

(Participant F 38 HW KH, Married/widow)

3.2.6 Invasion of privacy

Participants defined 'invasion of privacy' as persistent questions about what the Kakai are, their rituals, beliefs, and other relevant matters, including the men's moustaches. Eleven of the women in the third FGD (aged 46 - 70) expressed annoyance at their privacy being invaded, while all of the men across both FGDs agreed that this is one of the daily issues faced by Kakai men. It is likely that this was mentioned by the men in the FGDs more than the women as they have more interactions in the wider community with non-Kakai members. One of the women described the dilemma Kakai women face when these questions are posed to them:

We do not mind dealing with Muslims. The problem is with them. Therefore, I do not prefer mixing with Karamanj/Muslims, because after one or two meetings, they immediately ask, "Why don't you pray? Why don't you go to the mosque? Why is your religion like this? What is your religion? What do you do?" We have one of two paths: Either we don't mix with them or we respond by saying we are Kakai and we don't do these things. Then, they would accuse us of blasphemy.

(Participant F 53 HW S)

In contrast, many of the men described how the questions they were asked were centred around their moustaches, which make them recognisable as Kakai to those outside their community:

I am a farmer. They tell me in Al Alway, "Why don't you shave your moustache. We will not buy anything from you. You are Kakai. You are an infidel. Shave your moustache".

(Participant M 20 W KH)

I get asked this question often: What is this moustache? What does it mean? What does it symbolise? Why don't you pray? ... They put us into awkward situations.

(Participant M 27 W S)

These questions are often asked. What is this moustache? Why don't you shave it?...This happens a lot.

(Participant M 43 W H)

Participants described how invasions of their privacy can also be indirect. For example:

We have a Kurdish extremist Muslim neighbour who has a sweet shop in our area. He gives children free sweets and candies as a bribe, so he would ask them special information about the Kakai, particularly when there is a crowd or a gathering in the area, to the extent that we asked our children not to go there.

(Participant M 32 GI KH)

It is stated in the existing literature about the Kakai that they are a private people who prefer to keep their beliefs and rituals to themselves. This is partly because Kakaism is not a religion that individuals can be converted to, but rather passed on through generations (Salloum 2013: 167). It is also because the Kakai wish to avoid being questioned and interrogated. The impact of this on Kakai individuals is significant. The participants felt that the internalised fear of exposure means the community has become inward-looking and overly concerned with integration into society, to the detriment of their beliefs, values and their sense of who they are.

In 2010 we had an Arabic Language professor, who had a doctorate degree. When he came to class, he would ask us to read the Quran, and at first he said: "Kamran, Get out of the class", I said: "Why?" He said: "Does the Kakai read the Quran?" I said: "Why would he not read it?" He said: "Hmmm, I thought they do not read", so I told him: "You have attained a PhD degree and say, "I thought"? Shouldn't you be sure before saying that", and I read the Quran.

(Participant M 32 GI KH)

Nevertheless, in contrast to the above quote, most Kakai people prefer to keep silent when challenged about their beliefs or practices. FGD participants from all the groups agreed that silence is safer than responding, either because responding often develops into a quarrel or alienation, or because others are not convinced by their arguments, no matter how strong they are. In the end these arguments are futile and unhelpful:

Honestly, I hear a lot, but what do I answer them, what is the response? It is not just one incident or two. I am forced to stay silent and not respond to them, because of our religion. We must not talk about our religion. That is why we have to swallow words and insults, I get exposed to that often, not just once, twice or

thrice, but hundreds of thousands of times. We cannot confront everyone. We, the Kakai, are few compared to Muslims, so we stay away and remain silent. The problem with Muslims is that they do not recognise us nor do they accept us.

(Participant M 50 W S)

Or because for them responding and not responding are the same:

Whether you respond to them or not, it does not help. I prefer not to respond, because even if I wanted to explain to them, no matter how much I tried, they are pre-set on not believing us. So, it is better not to respond to them.

(Participant M 25 W S)

Others prefer silence and are quite convinced about it for other reasons that are considered sacred to them:

You should only listen, be silent and not respond to them. You should not argue with them, do you know why? Because that entails revealing our religion.

(Participant F 68 HW S, Married)

As a potential solution to the invasions the Kakai experience to their privacy, three of the men mentioned the need for a better shared definition of the Kakai. This would prevent much of the intrusive questioning that troubled many and mean that they no longer needed to be evasive. It would also help to counter the harmful myths and misconceptions about the Kakai. However, older men rejected the idea completely, and demanded that things remain the same (not speaking out about Kakai rituals and beliefs), because it is better that they remain a secret.

3.2.7 Bullying/harassment

Due to the norms and restrictions facing Kakai women, which keep them in the village with no job or profession, the number of women who identified bullying and harassment as a threat was low, especially compared to the men. The vast majority mentioned in their stories that they were harassed and bullied by Muslims while they were with their husbands in public places, as this is one of the few times they come into contact with those who aren't from the Kakai community:

They bully me because of the traditional outfit that I wear...I am sad because they look at us differently. Once I was walking with my husband in the main street,

*and a Muslim man spat on my husband and said to him: "You are a dog."
Because we are Kakai, they make fun of our moustaches.*

(Participant F 62 HW S, Married)

As with the invasion of privacy, it was clear that clothing and appearance makes Kakai people identifiable to the Muslim majority, making it difficult for them to spend time in public without experiencing bullying and/or harassment. In fact, all 24 of the men across FGDs four (aged 18 - 40) and five (aged 41 - 58) confirmed that they experience persistent, almost daily discrimination, for no reason, at school, at work, or even in public places, and even among colleagues. They felt that this sometimes escalated to slander:

Their problem is with the moustache and prayer...We get exposed to this situation a lot. I can say it happens daily.

(Participant M 45 W S)

I got to know someone through Facebook, and did not tell him that I am Kakai. I met him by chance in the market. When we talked and he knew that I am Kakai, he told me, "Your moustache is ugly and dirty and other things". So, I ended my relationship with him.

(Participant M 25 W S)

Unfortunately, this bullying and harassment often leads to physical violence against the Kakai. This might include inciting others to hurt the Kakai in their homes, such as by breaking in and smashing their windows, throwing stones into the house in the presence of the owners, or leaving threatening messages that they must move to another place, otherwise they will be exposed to killing or harm:

We used to hear openly and clearly on broadcasting devices that the killing of the Kakai was legal.

(Participant, M 56 W S RM)

There are official books available in libraries that incite the general killing of the Kakai. These instigators now have prominent positions in the political office of some Islamic political parties.

(Participant M 40 W S)

As a result of these actions, the Kakai are forced to abandon their homes, their regions and their cities to move to villages and rural areas in order to be close to the members of their sect, even if this is at the expense of leaving their jobs and source of livelihood and the deterioration of their economic situation, as well as the loss of the privileges and opportunities they enjoyed in the city. This is particularly significant for women because they tend to rely extensively on informal networks due to their restricted mobility. Therefore, the uprooting from their community tends to have particularly severe effects on their social capital and mental wellbeing.

We left our home in the city in Erbil ten years ago, and moved to the village in Safiya, because of their harassment and mockery of my husband's moustache. Every day he would be troubled and get into quarrels, and I was worried about his health, because he is diabetic. My children are young people who suffer from unemployment and lack of job opportunities. If we were in the city, it would be better.

(Participant F 47 HW S, Married)

3.2.8 Superstitions and myths

When participants identified superstitions and myths as a challenge, they were referring to the misconceptions about the Kakai that they are regularly subjected to. Ten of the women in the second FGD (aged 46-70) mentioned being accused of superstition, blasphemy and heresy. In contrast, 19 of the men mentioned superstitions and myths as a challenge they face, perhaps again because they have more contact with those outside of the Kakai community.

Participants discussed how rumours and incorrect preconceptions about the Kakai are spread among the majority of Muslims and how people outside the sect have ideas that stem from their own analysis and perspective about this sect. The Kakai are perceived by the wider community to connect with the *Djinn* (a supernatural being), deal with them and exploit them for their personal purposes, in addition to practicing magic and sorcery.

One day we were in Kirkuk to visit my father. And when we came back, I saw that the windows of our house were smashed, as our neighbours broke into our

house. When my husband asked them why they did this, they said because there is Djinn in this house.

(Participant F 47 HW S)

The Kakai are also accused of being *Sarili*, or infidels:

My neighbours are religious people. I usually let my children play for one hour outside the house. One day while my children were playing outside the house as usual, my neighbours' children came and broke their toys. And instead of apologising for what they did, they told us: "You are Sarlo", and I said: "We are Kakai." They said: "We tell you Kakai you get upset, we tell you Sarlo you are also upset."

(Participant F 47 HW S)

Calling Kakai 'Sarili' or 'Sarlo' was not limited to just one set of people, as one of the men outlined:

Not only the Kurds, but the Arabs also give us the name Sarlo or Sarili, meaning we have no religion.

(Participant M 40 W S)

The Kakai are also accused of blasphemy or words and actions that are offensive to Muslims and Islam.

Once in 2004 we were in the market with my cousin. People were mocking his moustache and shouting at us "Sarlo", meaning infidels, meaning you are Kakai and for this you are infidels. Things escalated to a fight, and a quarrel broke out. We asked my cousin to leave them alone, so the conflict would not escalate and the situation would not worsen.

(Participant F 46 HW S, Married)

Unfortunately, one of the men described how friendship isn't even enough to overpower the belief among those outside the sect that the Kakai are guilty of blasphemy:

My closest colleague knew after two years that I was a Kakai. He came and asked me: "Are you Kakai? You are an infidel". I asked him: You have known me for two years, did you see anything wrong with me?

(Participant M 38 T H)

One myth that was particularly prevalent in the discussions that took place in the FGDs with the men was 'Shawa Rash/Rash Ballah', which means gathering in a closed place, removing clothes and engaging in sexual activities with no rules, for example sex between family members. It is sometimes known as a 'black gathering'.

I used to work in a security position. They used to tell me that you meet once a month and turn off the lights.

(Participant M 40 W S)

They speak ill without having evidence. For example, they say to you, "You do the black gathering", meaning you have a sexual relationship with each other, the brother with his sister... And so on.

(Participant M 23 S & T S)

Millions of times I hear...For example, in the taxi conversation that I mentioned - they say you Kakai have a black night, when men and women gather in a dark room, be that a wife or a mother or a sister, and they meet for sexual purposes...This is very far from being true.

(Participant M 46 W S)

Some Muslims believe that the Kakai revere and worship Satan, or at least respect and love him. They believe that the Kakai do not accept insults levelled against him, and defend him when he is insulted.

They tell us, "You worship Satan".

(Participant M 27 W S)

Muslims believe that the Kakais bury their dead vertically, by digging a hole in the ground that fits the person's body to bury them longitudinally and not transversely as is customary in the methods of burial of the dead among most peoples and nations. This is seen as deviant and suspicious behaviour.

One day I was at work, working for an engineer. He is an engineer and has a degree. He told me: "I have a question", I said: "Go ahead", he said: "It is said that you, the Kakais, bury your dead standing in the grave". So I told him: "You are an engineer and you have a degree, how do you believe such allegations?"

(Participant M 43 W H)

One of the impacts of these superstitions and myths is that any minor friction or discussion can develop into a quarrel. Unfortunately, some participants explained that such accusations are heard so often, they may be taken simply and accepted by the Kakai without grumbling or complaint:

It is natural for the Kurds to call the Kakai infidels.

(Participant F 48 HW S, Married)

Another difficult impact of these superstitions and incorrect beliefs on the Kakai is linked to their ability to form community with others and partake together in important rituals, such as sharing food.

We eat their food, but they do not accept it from us because we are Kakai. They tell us, "We do not eat from your food because it is forbidden and you are filthy. It hurts me that they do not eat my food...I stopped sending them any food, but we eat their food when they give it to us.

(Participant F 45 HW S)

I have a neighbour and I used to give them part of every meal I made, one time her husband came - and there was a problem between them - and he said: "Umm Hussein, why do you send us food?" I said: "Why? Don't you eat it?" He said: "My wife throws the food, even the bread you send us, in the garbage". I didn't believe him. I said: "No, there is no such thing, she eats it". He said: "Don't you believe me? Come". He took me to show me, and he lifted the garbage lid. I saw the meatball I gave her that day thrown in the trash...I was very annoyed... And when she was sick and had an operation, and had problems, I visited her, but I didn't bring her any food. I said she doesn't eat it.

(Participant F 46 HW KH, divorced)

They accuse women of being hairy, meaning they have hair on their hands and arms, and therefore are unclean. So they do not eat from our food. At school, when I used to take certain home-cooked foods or homemade cakes, my friends would not eat of my food or apologise for any reason so as not to share the food with me.

(Participant F 20 ST S, Single)

3.2.9 Discrimination at work

Discrimination at work was highlighted by the women in the first FGD and men in both of their FGDs. One possible explanation for this is because women in the younger generation are more likely to work than women of the older generations, due to changing customs. Since the participants in the first FGD are young women aged 18-34 years, there were those among them who have finished their studies in higher education. They emphasised the discrimination they were exposed to in obtaining a profession that matches their level of education:

Two months ago I read about a ministerial order from the Ministry of Health to appoint Christians, Yazidis and Shabaks in Mosul. This did not include the Kakais. I wondered about this discrimination. Why this discrimination while we all believe in and worship God?

(Participant F 24 S Single)

In relation to this particular ministerial order, one of the men highlighted how this is also a consequence of not having any Kakai representatives in positions of decision-making:

As happened in 2020/2021, with the issuance of a decision regarding the appointment of Christian and Shabak people in state institutions, such as schools, universities and other government departments. This did not include Kakais. This was quite difficult for us. This was prepared by the efforts of the deputies of the Christian and Shabak components in the Iraqi Parliament, and we had no representative to support us regarding this decision.

(Participant M 38 T H)

The majority of the women who identified discrimination at work as an issue, addressed the issue of gender discrimination in the field of work and market-based professions and enterprises:

Liberal professions are not available for women. They are not free to engage in self-employment, as in sewing or establishing a women's hairdresser shop. We have some among the Kakai, but they are very few...One of the reasons for the difficulty in achieving this is the lack of economic capacity, since it requires a considerable amount of money to open a shop and provide the required tools such as a sewing machine...I focused on self-employment, because women are restricted in this field and are not like men who take up any job, while women cannot.

(Participant F 26 HW KH, Married)

The impact of discrimination is even more severe in the private sector, in comparison to government work, because the issue of employment or dismissal, vacations, bonuses and all other matters relevant to work depends on the owner of the business or the manager.

Employers can reject people based on their personal convictions and mood, and not according to the administrative regulations or the provisions of the administrative control of the public office:

I am a graduate of the school of Tourism Management. When I apply for a job in the private sector, whether in hotels or in tourism companies, after submitting my CV and going through an interview, I find them telling me: "You must change your appearance". I ask them, "And what do my face and appearance have to do with the job?" They say: "This is our policy", and I answer them that I will not work with them.

(Participant M 32 GI KH)

I would apply for a job and when they see my moustache, they would say: "We do not need workers, we have our own workers". But I know that they did not grant me a job, because I am Kakai. I was exposed to such situations a lot.

(Participant M 50 W S)

I am a daily wager, I am self-employed, I work in everything, I worked for a period in a kitchen manufacturing pastry and sweets for 15 days. Then, when they found out that I was a Kakai, they fired me.

(Participant M 46 W S)

Where they are not outrightly denied jobs, the Kakai may be forced to perform actions that are contrary to their religion in return for jobs or privileges:

During 2011/2012, an official with a high government position asked me to shave my moustache in exchange for a certain political party position, but I refused.

(Participant M 40 W S)

A few years ago, my cousin applied for the military college in Zakho. He went for the interview, and they all stood in a long queue. When the commander appeared, he looked at my cousin and saw his moustache. He said to him: "We have a condition, either you shave your moustache or we won't accept you." My cousin threw down the file and went back to Erbil. He now works as a salesman in a shop.

(Participant M 29 W KH)

Coercion may take other forms, for example:

In October 2021, when I applied for a government position, they asked me to register myself as being from the Shabak component, so that I would be accepted in the job. But, I refused. I said, "How can I change myself for a job!"

(Participant M 38 T H)

They pressure me a lot to give the Islamic testimony⁷, but I refuse.

(Participant M 20 W KH)

Participants explained how the Kakai are exposed to discrimination at work and in employment no matter what work they do. Sometimes the discrimination is so bad that they choose to leave, despite the negative economic consequences:

Previously we used to live in Mosul, during the Saddam era before 2003. For example, we often used to stand with our colleagues in a public place in Mosul, and they would say: "You Sarlo don't pray and so". We turned away from them, and for me I am a daily wager, and I often quit my job because of that....I often

⁷ The first pillar of Islam is the testimony that "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God".

left my work, although my work was good and profitable. Yet, I quit it, because of their words: "Why don't you pray?" and things like this. Even now I do the same thing and I quit my job.

(Participant M 41 W S)

In some cases, the discrimination is more subtle, but the participants know they were being watched and judged:

Four years ago, I trained women on sewing in a course for women of all religions, sects and nationalities. However, I noticed that Muslim women were watching me at prayer times and whether I was going to pray or not. I noticed this only with the Kurds and not by other nationalities.

(Participant F 49 HW KH)

Even owning their own business doesn't protect the Kakai from discrimination, as people from the Muslim majority simply refuse to buy their goods:

I have a shop/store, in the market. However, no one comes to buy from me. Only the Kakai come, those around me and my neighbours, only the Kakai.

(Participant M 45 W S)

I am a man who sells vegetables and fruits. I bring them from far away, and they get sold in our village. However, villagers from other areas like Kalak and Khabat do not buy from us... Or buy but very little. For example, they ask us, "Where did you get the goods from?" I say: "From Shaikhan", so they say: "Shaikhan is all Yezidis, and you are Kakai and we are Islam... So my goods are sold with difficulty.

(Participant M 43 S VS)

This boycotting of Kakai businesses is not new. In the 1990s in Khabat and Aski Kalak, on the border between Erbil and Mosul, Muslims refused to buy bread from a bakery owned by a Kakai. This happens elsewhere:

We had a shop selling chicken. Muslims were urging people not to buy chicken from us, saying it is forbidden. Muslims do not buy from us, only the Kakai used to buy from us. Once a woman came and bought some chicken, but she refused

to have me slaughter the chicken, saying: "I will slaughter it. It is forbidden for you to slaughter it." I was hurt by the situation, so I took the chicken from her and did not sell it to her. After that, we changed the shop to a sweet shop, but they still boycott our goods and do not buy from them, and even demand people not to buy from us, because it is forbidden.

(Participant F 38 HW KH, Married, Illiterate)

The boycott of Kakai goods led to closure of the shops, which has a negative impact on their economic situation:

Some owners of vegetable and fruit stores in Khabat closed their stores because there are no buyers for their goods...There are butcher shops that no one buys meat from...Take a pot of milk and say I want to sell it, if you go around the market, no one will buy it from you.

(Participant M 56 W S RM)

3.2.10 Forced marriage

Forced marriage was only mentioned by four of the women in the first FGD (aged 18 - 34). Most of them are young and have four or five children, and do not consider themselves to be forced into marrying at a young age. They believe this to be normal, and not unfair to them.⁸ This shows how usual it is within the Kakai community for girls to be married young without any real concept of choice.

The women who did identify forced marriage as a threat stated that they were subjected to it or were pressured into marrying a man they neither wanted nor liked:

I feel that the girl has no opinion, and her opinion is not well respected in most families, so I am afraid to talk about my dreams and ambitions. Her family forces her to marry.

(Participant F 20 ST S, Single)

⁸ However, during the break and after the meeting ended, I found them showering me with questions about the reason for marrying girls off at a young age, for example: 'Is it my fault that I am deprived of my childhood and that I have been preoccupied with marriage, motherhood and housework? Why is the boy free to choose his life partner, divorce and marry another, while the wife has to bear the husband's faults for the children's sake?...etc.'

3.2.11 Researcher reflections on the women's focus groups

Each of the FGDs with the women resulted in slightly different discussions and reflections. It was clear from the first FGD (women aged 18 - 34) that discrimination within the family against girls continues after marriage. Some husbands deprive their daughters of an education, as if history is repeating itself. There was a sense of resentment, even anger, from the women in the FGDs, who had strong complaints about the discrimination practiced against them by their families, just because they are women.

In the second FGD (women aged 35 - 45), there was a sense of injustice regarding the restriction of their rights to education and employment by their families, as well as their rejection of the idea of gender discrimination despite their forced submission. In contrast, the percentage of complaints about discrimination within the family among the third FGD (women aged 46 - 70) was lower, where participants tended to accept discrimination within the family as if it were a given.

The reason for this could be because they are mothers of daughters beyond adolescence. Thus, they are used to refraining from complaining and grumbling, so that these feelings would not get transmitted to their daughters, who must accept their fate as their mothers accepted theirs before them.

4 Priority needs: education, gender discrimination and the economic situation

The demand for education is one of the basic demands of women of all age groups, because if families believe in educating their children, they prefer to educate boys rather than girls. At best, a girl is sent to school at the primary or intermediate level, and is not allowed to continue onto secondary school or university level. For families with limited incomes, girls' chances of education gradually diminish. Even boys may be forced to drop out of school, and their fathers may force them to work to earn a living instead of 'wasting' their time in school.

Discrimination at school and pressure to conform to the majority religion hampers children's education. For girls, this can include being urged to wear the hijab or to wear an Islamic outfit. When students seek to hide their religious identities they can face suspicion if they are not seen to follow Muslim rituals (prayers, fasting, etc.).

Furthermore, family and clans can limit girls' education, particularly at the university level. Prior to 2003, there were a limited number of universities and institutes, all of which were governmental and located in the city centre. Thus, the girl would be forced to stay in boarding schools or the students' dormitory for days, weeks, months or even years if they were to attend. Parents may fear that their girls will convert or choose to marry a Muslim man. Alternatively, they are concerned that educated young women may be in a better position to question clan and family decisions in a way that is considered rude and untraditional. The desire to keep girls uneducated and unquestioning is a prompt for early marriage.

However, the majority of families now send their daughters to institutes and universities as circumstances have changed, with more public and private institutes and universities now available. In addition, there are better transport links between villages and the city, enabling women and girls to more easily commute.

The men's FGDs placed less emphasis on education, perhaps because their freedom of movement is less curtailed and their parents are more likely to support their education, with the exception of rare cases, where the father may force his son to leave school to work with him in the field or some other form of labour.

Hence, the deteriorating economic conditions of a family that believes in the importance of education means choosing which of the children gets the privilege to learn. This battle is decided in favour of the males, while the females stay at home to help their mother with the housework. It is also believed that there is no need to spend much on her, since her destiny is marriage and stability in the house of her husband, who will take care of her expenses.

Some families even consider the expenses spent on a girl in school and university education as excess and wasted expenses, since she will eventually go to her husband's house, who will reap the fruits of her family's labour and will benefit from her allowances and salary if she gets appointed a job in the future.

5 Conclusion

A woman belonging to a particular religion faces challenges of a special nature, both internally and externally. The internal level is represented in those challenges that she faces from within her community, starting in the household with her family, relatives, and even the well-respected men of religion in her community through fatwas issued prohibiting and permitting certain actions. In small communities, where people know each other well, women can be surveilled and forced into compliance with community norms. Women can also choose to conform to rules because it provides them with certain benefits or as a means to evade punishment.

This can lead to women's exclusion from education and the workplace, with the knock-on effect of impoverishing the family. Early marriage may be a solution to rising household costs and the exertion of ensuring compliance. Sometimes, an exchange marriage is arranged, so the girl would be exchanged for the dowry, and the furnishing of the new home would be split between the two families. Each family would get a girl from the other, taking into account as much equality as possible in terms of the expenses incurred by each girl. While some couples in an exchange marriage may feel intimate and connected, others experience quarrels and problems. Women can also be treated like a commodity, with no respect for an individual's will.

Even after a woman has overcome all these obstacles and threats, women suffer when they mix with other components of society, in school, at university, or at work. There is also the journey of endless debate and discussion about the Kakai, their rituals and customs, and whether Kakaism is a religion, sect, or clan, etc. Kakais are also pressured to conform religiously. This is the day-to-day experience of Kakai women in Iraq.

To improve the conditions of the Kakai women in Iraq, this paper recommends:

- Encouraging investment banks to grant low-interest loans for small projects to women who live in poor economic conditions. These conditions are to be assessed according to the reports and studies of social supervisors in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.
- Establishing handicraft factories that allow women to work and earn an income for their family without having to travel far or having to travel to cities.

- Availing institutes within the districts and sub-districts, and providing means of transportation to facilitate the access of girls from the village to the centre of the district or to the sub-district to study, without having to travel to other cities or to join boarding schools or dormitories.
- Holding courses and workshops in the form of meetings with focus group members and expanding their numerical scope to listen to their stories and experiences. Through the FGDs conducted for this research, there was an evident desire among the Kakai women to speak about and reveal their suffering. Many participants expressed their happiness to join such discussions, revealing how, for the first time in their lives, they had an opportunity to speak freely about their experiences and suffering within their families, clan and community without being ridiculed or silenced because they are women who should not speak about such topics.
- Issuance of a law enforcing compulsory education until a certain age for girls and boys, as well as imposing punishment on anyone who does not comply. This would be similar to the law that was in force under the former Baathist regime before 2003⁹, where families were forced to send their daughters to school until the intermediate stage, which was an opportunity to teach women to read and write.
- Modifying the curricula for the primary stages in a manner consistent with the diversity that exists in Iraq, such as introducing the curriculum of the demographic composition of the Iraqi people with its diverse components in terms of nationality, language, religion, sect, race, etc. The curriculum should introduce children early on to the rich structure of the Iraqi people, their cultural peculiarities, and the geographical locations of each component, without this implying a missionary campaign¹⁰ calling for a religion other than the Islamic religion, which is the majority religion both for the state and the region.

⁹ Education was not only compulsory, but the Iraqi government during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) launched a literacy campaign to enable women deprived of education to combat ignorance and illiteracy. The researcher's mother was one of the participants in that campaign. Despite being married and having three children, she learned to read and write, and obtained an elementary education certificate, thanks to which she managed to help her children pursue their studies.

¹⁰ In 2018, a committee was selected to develop a Kurdology curriculum for first-year students at Salahaddin University. The researcher was among the candidates put forward to develop the social section of the curriculum, among other

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professors, and had proposed to allocate a section that tackles the demographic composition of the population in the Kurdistan Region (in terms of historical origin and the geographical space they occupy, their locations, languages or dialects, as well as other matters). This was with the intention of introducing Kurdish children to the different nationalities within the region. Surprisingly, this suggestion was met with disapproval by university professors at the Faculty of Islamic Law, as this was considered to be a threat to the Islamic religion and deemed to be a missionary campaign to invite Muslims to enter a non-Islamic religion, alongside other accusations.





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Annexe 1 – Participatory ranking

The following tables are keyed according to the below colours to show the choices behind the challenges raised by the focus group members:

Key:

Colour/symbol	Meaning
	the participant answered to their critics and did not keep silent before them.
	the participant wants to resolve the issue of identity.
	there is positive discrimination against minorities by government decisions or political positions.
	the (female) participant did not experience rejection of her food or vows.
-	the participant did not mention this in their talk.

Displacement due to ISIS	6	8	5	10	8	6	5	3	3	6	7	3
Laws	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Discrimination at work	-	2	-	5	4	-	3	-	4	-	-	-
Coercion	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forced marriage	-	-	-	8	-	7	-	4	-	-	8	-
Bullying/harassment	-	5	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-
Bullying within the tribe	-	-	-	7	5	-	-	-	-	3	4	-
Invasion of privacy	-	3	-	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	2	-
Suicide	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Withdrawal/isolation	-	7	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-

Silence/avoiding responding	-	6	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
Freedom of movement	-	-	4	-	3	5	2	-	-	4	-	-
Poverty	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	5	5	-	2
Life in the camp	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Respect for women	3	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
An inferior view	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Refusing to share food	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table A2 The second FGD of women 35-45 years old

Challenge	Sequence of participants											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Age	45	35	37	40	41	39	44	41	38	45	38	35
Deprivation of education	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
Dropping out of school	1	-	-	6	3	1	2	-	2	-	1	2
Educated	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Safety and stability				8	1	3	6	4	3	2	-	3
Displacement before 2003	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Displacement after 2003	-	9	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-

Displacement due to ISIS	4	10	5	9	2	5	7	5	5	3	15	4
Discrimination at work	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Coercion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
Incitement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-
Superstitions and myths	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-
Bullying/harassment	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	9	8	-
Bullying within the tribe	-	5	6	5	-	9	5	-	8	-	-	1
Underage marriage	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	4	6
Forced marriage	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	-	7	5	5	7
Invasion of privacy	7	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	7	12	-

Concealing the identity	5	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Withdrawal/isolation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Silence/avoiding responding	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Freedom of movement	-	-	-	7	5	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Family stability	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender discrimination	3	3	-	3	4	7	3	7	-	6	2	8
Harassing young girls	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laws	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	9	-	-	-
Suicide	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education is improper	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-

Poverty	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	8	1	1	3	-
An inferior view	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-
Refusing to share food	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	14	-
Discrimination in public places	10	6	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	11	-
Language	-	-	-	-	6	9	4	-	-	-	-	-

Table A3 The third FGD of 46-68-year-old women

Challenge	Sequence of participants											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Age	49	46	53	47	57	48	62	68	46	66	49	46
Deprivation of education	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
Dropping out of school	1	-	-	1	-	8	-	-	-	-	1	1
Gender discrimination	2	3	2	-	2	9	2	-	-	2	2	2
Displacement before 2003	-	-	3	-	5	6	3	7	2	3	-	-
Displacement after 2003	-	-	4	8	-	-	4	-	-	4	4	-
Displacement due to ISIS	12	4	5	9	6	7	5	8	3	5	5	3

Discrimination at work	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-
Coercion	4	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Incitement	-	-	-	7	4	-	-	11	-	-	6	-
Superstitions and myths	11	8	7	4	-	2	9	4	6	8	10	-
Bullying/harassment	8	7	8	5	8	1	8	5	4	7	7	-
Invasion of privacy	3	5	6	3	7	3	7	9	10	13	9	-
Refusing to share food	9	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	9	11	13	4
An inferior view	10	9	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	10	-	-
Concealing identity	6	6	-	10	10	4	11	6	-	9	12	-

Withdrawal/isolation	-	-	10	11	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Silence/avoiding responding	7	-	9	12	-	5	-	10	7	-	11	-
Freedom of movement	5	-	-	2	-	10	-	-	-	-	3	-
Underage marriage	-	-	-	-	3	-	10	2	-	-	-	-
Forced marriage	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	3	8	-	-	-
Poverty	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	8	-
Discrimination in public places	13	10	-	-	-	11	12	-	5	12	14	-
Laws	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-

Table A4 The fourth FGD (men) 18-40 years old

Challenge	Sequence of participants													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Age	38	35	24	40	19	25	27	24	25	32	29	23	40	20
Education	2	5	-	-	6	1	-	5	13	3	8	1	1	6
Displacement before 2003	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	11	-
Displacement after 2003	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	2	1	-	2	12	-
Displacement due to ISIS	8	10	1	6	5	4	4	4	3	2	7	3	13	5
Discrimination at work	1	-	2	7	-	10	1	-	14	4	9	6	7	7
Coercion	11	-	4	-	-	9	3	7	7	6	10	5	8	8

Incitement	9	7	3	-	-	11	-	-	-	10	-	4	9	4
Superstitions and myths	7	4	7	3	-	-	6	6	8	8	6	9	2	3
Bullying/harassment	3	6	8	2	4	7	5	2	6	5	5	7	5	10
Invasion of privacy	6	2	5	1	2	2	2	1	5	7	4	8	4	9
Concealing identity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-
Withdrawal/isolation	5	-	10	5	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-
Silence/avoiding responding	4	3	9	4	3	8	-	3	9	9	3	10	3	-
Discrimination in public places	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	11	11	1	-	-	11

An inferior view	10	1	6	-	-	12	8	-	10	12	2	11	6	1
Refusing to share food	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	12
Determination of identity	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	-	-	2
Discrimination in sports	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Positive discrimination	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	10	-

Table A5 The fifth FGD (men 41-58 years old)

Challenge	Sequence of participants									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Age	50	41	45	50	43	46	58	42	55	43
Education	6	11	8	12	-	12	7	7	-	9
Displacement before 2003	1	1	1	7	6	4	2	4	3	3
Displacement after 2003	2	2	2	8	7	5	3	5	4	4
Displacement due to ISIS	3	3	3	9	8	6	4	6	5	5
Discrimination at work	7	6	4	1	1	3	10	8	2	1
Coercion	-	7	-	6	5	8	9	-	-	-
Incitement	5	12	-	-	9	-		9	6	10
Superstitions and myths	9	4	-	10	3	9	6	3	9	8

Bullying/harassment	4	9	6	2	4	7	5	2	1	6
Invasion of privacy	8	5	5	3	2	2	1	1	10	7
Concealing identity	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Withdrawal/isolation	11	10	-	5	11	11	12	-	-	-
Silence/avoiding responding	10	13	-	4	10	10	11	-	7	-
An inferior view	12	8	7	11	-	13	13	-	8	2



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