

Secretary of State John Kerry's Statement
ISIL's Dehumanization of Women and Girls
October 14, 2014

Just days after we saw the best of humanity when Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, we again confront the worst of inhumanity in ISIL. No one needed a reminder of ISIL's depravity and evil. But now we have the latest example.

ISIL now proudly takes credit for the abduction, enslavement, rape, forced marriage, and sale of several thousand Yezidi and other minority women and girls—some as young as 12 years old. Just as despicably, ISIL rationalizes its abhorrent treatment of these women and girls by claiming it is somehow sanctioned by religion. Wrong. Dead wrong.

ISIL does not represent Islam and Islam does not condone or honor such depravity. In fact, these actions are a reminder that ISIL is an enemy of Islam. The international community and religious leaders of all faiths have strongly and repeatedly condemned ISIL's horrific acts; we urge them to reiterate their commitment by condemning in the strongest possible terms the commodification of women and children as spoils of war, including through their subjection to horrific physical and sexual violence, intimidation, and deprivation of liberty.

These acts transgress all definitions of human dignity and those individuals responsible must be identified and held fully accountable. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Cathy Russell said it best: "Such viciousness against innocents exposes ISIL's blatant rejection of the most basic progress we have made as a community of nations and the universal values that bind civilization." The United States will not stand by as ISIL uses fear, violence and oppression to achieve its goals.

To stop ISIL's campaign of terror and horror against the Syrian and Iraqi people, we remain steadfast in our efforts to lead the international coalition to degrade and defeat ISIL. The United States will keep tracking ISIL's abduction, enslavement, sale, rape, forced marriage, and abuse of women and girls. We will keep working with the new Government of Iraq to respond to ISIL's brutality against women and girls from all communities in Iraq, including vulnerable minority populations.