Iraq: initial progress in the project with the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation

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Nearly a year after announcing its collaboration with the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation (based in the DRC), the Sanofi Espoir Foundation is in a position to present the first advances in Iraq. The partnership aims to provide holistic care for Yazidi survivors of sexual violence and slavery. In 2014, the Yazidi community in Sinjar, in northwestern Iraq, was the target of an attack by the Islamic State. Forced into displacement, the Yazidi population found sanctuary in refugee camps. An estimated 2,600 Yazidi women and girls were still missing in 2019.

Since July 2019, teams from the Mukwege Foundation and its local partner Yazda have aided these women and girls through:

- **Medical assistance**: Yazda social workers have identified victims in need of medical assistance and 29 survivors were given care. In addition, 25 beneficiaries were referred to various medical, psychosocial, and socio-economic services.
- **Psychosocial assistance**: the team on the spot carried out individual visits and 86 people received psychosocial support. Group sessions were also conducted by the social workers to start therapeutic conversations among survivors.
- **Socio-economic assistance**: Two priorities - training workshops and hygiene kits - have been identified. To date, 71 women have benefited from livelihood education in IDP camps and 20 survivors have received hygiene kits.

"I'm so happy! I'm now making sweets for my children at home myself. The training was a good idea," says Ahlam, a survivor mother of three.

Through its support, the Sanofi Espoir Foundation has contributed to providing access to basic healthcare, psychosocial support, and the creation of learning units for members of the Yazidi community. One of the project's next phases will be to analyze the psychological needs of vulnerable children in order to build further capacity for relevant practitioners in Iraq, such as psychologists and social workers.