

# ANNUAL REPORT

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**Asuda Organization  
For Combating  
Violence Against  
Women**

**Leading Actor in Supporting Survivors  
GBV and SGBV in KRI and Iraq**

**2020**

**2020 Asuda Annual Report**  
**Leading Actor in Supporting Survivors of GBV and SGBV in KRI and Iraq**

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## About Us

Asuda for Combating Violence Against Women is a non-for-profit local organization which was founded in 2000 and registered in 2001 with the Ministry of Humanitarian Assistance and Cooperation in Sulaimaniyah, Iraqi Kurdistan. Asuda is dedicated to combating violence against women through an institutional and systematic approach to enhance the status of women regardless of differences in ethnic grouping and religious background. Asuda's strategy underscores a multifaceted approach to addressing violence against women through protection, awareness, research, capacity building, and empowerment.

Asuda opened the very first women's shelter in Iraq in 2002, providing protection for women who face domestic violence, abuse, and honor-related killings. The shelter provided rehabilitation, counseling, social mediation, problem resolution, support in finding job opportunities, and free legal service to destitute women. Asuda telephone hotline (110) assisted victims of violence through counseling, referral, and advice. Asuda ran the shelter for 14 years, until government-run shelters came into existence. After its closure, Asuda referred its cases to the governmental shelters.

### Asuda's Vision

Asuda aims to build a world where women prosper through access to equal rights and resources and opportunities.

Asuda strives to eliminate all forms of discrimination and marginalization against women to address societal structural problems and challenge the norms and attitudes limiting women's freedom and agency.

### Asuda's Mission

Asuda is committed to gender equity and the empowerment of women.

Asuda works to combat violence against women and girls by advocating for women's rights and providing quality multi-sectoral responses for gender-based violence survivors.

## What We Do

Asuda empowers women to actively contribute to their community and society, participate in decision-making processes, and lead social, political, and economic transformation.

Asuda supports vulnerable women and girls (widows, IDPs, refugees, SGBV survivors, FHH, etc.) socially and economically in acquiring the proper skills to become economically independent and self-reliant.

- **Protection & Awareness**

Asuda acts against all forms of gender-based violence, seeks its prevention, and works towards women's protection.

Asuda provides protection services to women in the form of psychological, social, and legal support directly and via a telephone hotline.

Asuda refers to cases requiring physical protection to the government and other shelters.

Asuda promotes awareness of women's rights across society and engages women and men to change people's mentality about the consequences of gender-based violence and SGBV through mass media, conferences, seminars, and workshops.

- **Emergency Response**

Asuda seeks to alleviate the hardships women endure in the face of armed conflict and supports their efforts at recovery, resilience, and sustainable development.

- **Advocacy**

Asuda advocates for peaceful and durable solutions to conflict that require multi-faceted approaches at grassroots and political levels with women's full participation.

Asuda's advocacy endeavours to amend laws and regulations that discriminate against women and women's interests, and Asuda carries out campaigns to put pressure on the government and other institutions and organizations to ensure the implementation of UN resolutions and international conventions such as UN SCR1325, UNSCR1820, SCR1888 and SCR2242.

## THE ISSUES

- **Gender-Based-Violence**
  - Gender-based-violence is an ongoing social dilemma and a continuous threat on human rights and dignity.
- **Risks to the LGBTQI community**
  - As a marginalized minority group, LGBTQI people face constant threats from society.
- **Social Norms**
  - Several social norms within the community give rise to inequality and social stigma.
- **Increased violence against human rights defenders across Iraq**
  - The challenges and obstacles facing the human rights defenders has gotten so extreme as to threaten their lives. Peaceful protesters are the most vulnerable groups facing this threat.
- **Government's lack of priority towards women's issues**
  - Like many other crucial issues, women's issue receives little attention from the Iraqi government.
- **The increase in GBV and domestic violence as a result of small gun ownership.**

## OUR RESPONSES

- Asuda has been a leading figure in the response to combat gender-based-violence. Through its various services, Asuda has created a safe space for survivors of gender-based-violence.
- Whether through direct service provision or through community awareness, Asuda has always supported the LGBTQI community.
- Asuda has tackled many sensitive social norms through community outreach and engaged various societal groups in civil and fruitful roundtables and group discussions.
- Asuda has condemned any threat towards human rights defenders and works tirelessly to end the unjust treatments of human rights activists.
- Asuda has worked towards increasing women's voices and the discussion of women's issues within the Iraqi government.

- Asuda has conducted thorough research on the correlation between firearms and the increase of violence against women in Iraq: seeking effective recommendations for Decision Makers.

## Areas We Cover

- **Case Management**

Asuda has been a pioneer in case management and psychosocial service provision. In 2019, through three listening centers in Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, and Duhok, Asuda has provided psychosocial and legal support to survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Within the listening centers, psychologists, social workers, and lawyers provide psychosocial sessions and provide legal consultation and representation to GBV survivors.

- **Community Engagement in Civil Discourse**

Asuda has engaged decision makers, stakeholders, and leaders in society to address sensitive and crucial social issues such as masculinity, gender roles, and gender norms. One of Asuda's signature programs in 2019 was engaging men and boys in several workshops and training sessions to address gender-based violence and ways to prevent it.

- **Capacity Building and Mentorship Exchanges**

Asuda saw a gap in the quality of the service provision by government shelters due to the government's lack of funds to these shelters. In response, Asuda provided a series of intensive trainings to the staff of Erbil's and Duhok's women shelters.

Asuda also implemented a mentorship exchange program/workshop on the KRG's experience in advocating for and passing the Act of Combating Domestic Violence (Act #8 2011). This law is the only one that exists in Iraq to combat domestic violence. Many attempts are currently underway to pass a similar law in the Iraqi Parliament. In order to support the exchange of ideas and experiences between civil society organizations in the north of Iraq with the center and south of Iraq, this one week program provided participating CSO from the center and south with the opportunity to meet with the KRG's relevant authorities (High Judicial Council, Anti Domestic Violence Investigation Court in Sulaimaniyah, Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women in

Sulaimaniyah, former members of the KRG Parliament) to learn about the advocacy efforts it took to pass the law, the government bodies in charge of implementing the law and the gaps and challenges facing the implementation of the law.

- **Advocacy**

Asuda advocates for peaceful and durable solutions to conflict that require multi-faceted approaches at grassroots and political levels with the full participation of women.

Asuda pursues the amendment of laws and regulations that are discriminatory against women and women's interests and aims to carry out campaigns to put pressure on the government and other institutions and organizations to ensure implementation of UN resolutions and international conventions such as UN SCR1325, UNSCR1820, SCR1888 and SCR2242 and CEDAW. Asuda is a member of Iraq National Action Plan for UN SCR1325 (INAP).

Our advocacy work increases awareness on the situation of women, calls attention to human rights issues faced by women, and informs effective responses to alleviate women's suffering and find lasting solutions to the causes of women's marginalization. Our advocacy work serves to shake down apathy and awaken the conscience of local society and the world community in order to achieve policy changes, legal reform, and stronger enforcement of laws and practices that defend women. Our advocacy takes 3 forms:

- Local led advocacy
- Government advocacy
- Partner led joint advocacy

- **Livelihood**

In partnership with UN Women, Asuda launched a successful and important job placement project for women and girls in an attempt to encourage women and girls to be financially independent. The project was implemented in Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, and Duhok and it had a great and life-changing influence on many women and girls.

- **Emergency Response:**

Asuda confronts the humanitarian crisis in Iraq with efforts to alleviate the suffering and save the lives of women, particularly as the crisis of war and displacement has taken an exceptional toll on their physical and psychological well-being. We ensure that the special needs of women are adequately met in the context of emergency response. This includes

putting up measures that reduce women's exposure to violence during the crisis of displacement.

Asuda provided emergency relief, livelihood opportunities, and psychosocial support to women in refugees' camps and IDPs communities.

- **Cash Assistance**

In partnership with Vital Voices Global Partnership, Asuda has provided cash assistance to survivors of extreme gender-based violence from 2014 and is still ongoing. Up until 2019, cash assistance to 158 women has been provided with a budget of over half a million dollars.



## Areas of Asuda Organization's services

Sulaimaniyah, Halabja, Erbil, Duhok, Baghdad



## Asuda By Numbers

A Total of 804 women, men, and children were provided with psychosocial and legal services

A Total of 230 survivors benefited from the cash assistance services

A Total of 120 male leaders and decision makers participated in Asuda's signature program: Boys' and Men's Engagement Program

A Total of 20 female activists attended Women Empowerment sessions in Sulaimaniyah, Erbil and Duhok

A Total of 10 women and girls received small grant to establish their business in Mosul

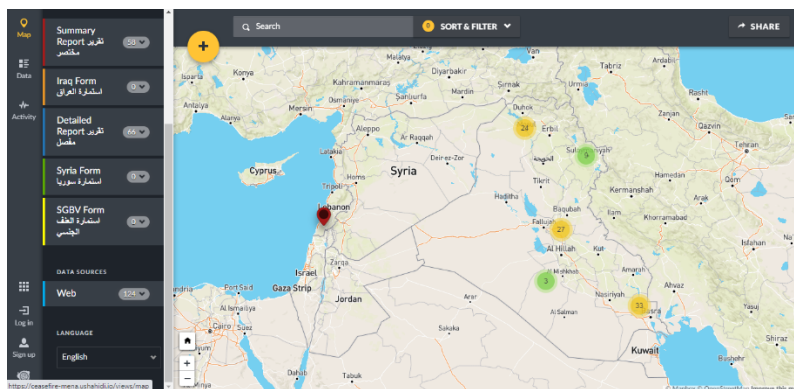
A Total of 30 NGO representative and stakeholders participated in Asuda's mentorship program

Trained 20 Human Rights defenders on monitoring, reporting, and documentation of Human Rights violations across Iraq

### Ceasefire MENA:

Using Online platform to report on Human Rights Violation in Iraq <https://ceasefire-mena.ushahidi.io/>

Since 2015, under the project of “**Defending civilian rights and promoting reparation and accountability in Iraq**”, Asuda Organization in Partnership with Ceasefire International has developed an online tool known as Ceasefire MENA to allow activists, Human Right defenders, NGOs or any survivors of violence to report any types of Human Rights violation using this online platform. In three main governorates in Iraq (Baghdad, Mosul and Basra) Asuda researchers were responsible for collecting and submitting monthly data on Human Right Violations in the cities.



Furthermore, in order to allow human right defenders to better access to the platform, Asuda conducted a two-day workshop in Sulaimaniyah for a group of twenty Human Rights activists to be equipped with effective tools for monitoring and documentation of Human Rights violations across Iraq. Civil Society activist, women activists, Human Rights activists who are working as Human Rights defenders from different local NGOs attended the workshop from three governorates of Iraq: Mosul, Baghdad and Basra.

## Asuda's Partners

### 1. Vital Voices

Vital Voices Global Partnership is a global movement that invests in women leaders who are solving the world's greatest challenges. We are "venture catalysts," identifying those with a daring vision for change and partnering with them to make that vision a reality. We scale and accelerate impact through long term investments to expand skills, connections, capacity and visibility. Over the last 22 years, we have built a network of 18,000 change makers across 182 countries who are collectively daring to reimagine a more equitable world for all.



### 2. The U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Alsdkjf



### 3. UN Women

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands

behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality, and in all deliberations and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda. The entity works to position gender equality as fundamental to the Sustainable Development Goals, and a more inclusive world.

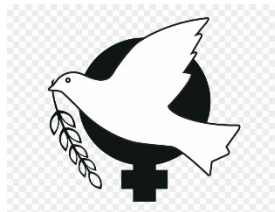


United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

#### 4. [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF](#)

On 28 April 1915, during World War I, a unique group of 1,136 women from warring and neutral nations gathered in The Hague, the Netherlands, to discuss how to end the war and ensure permanent peace. The meeting ended with the foundation of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom.

The organisers of the congress were prominent suffragists, who saw the link between their struggle for women's right and the struggle for peace. They believed that the full and equal participation of women in the decision-making processes was necessary to achieve sustainable peace.



#### 5. [MADRE](#)

MADRE is an international women's human rights organization. We partner with community-based women's groups worldwide facing war and disaster. Our mission is to

advance women’s human rights by meeting urgent needs in communities and building lasting solutions to the crises women face. Our history is rooted in progressive movements for peace, justice and women’s human rights.



6. [Ceasefire Center for Civilian Rights](#)

The Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights is an international initiative to develop civilian-led monitoring of violations of international humanitarian law or human rights; to secure accountability and reparation for those violations; and to develop the practice of civilian rights.



7. [Minority Rights Group](#)

Minority Rights Group International campaigns worldwide with around 150 partners in over 50 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard. Through training and education, legal cases, publications and the media and cultural programmes we support minority and indigenous people as they strive to maintain their rights – to the land they live on, the languages they speak, to equal opportunities in education and employment, and to full participation in public life.



## Asuda's Finances

Asuda's funding comes from a variety of donations and fundraising activities. Most funds are given by organizations, bodies and individuals, either from the private sector (trusts and foundations), or the public sector (statutory and governments). Asuda is very grateful to all the partners who have worked with us in 2019 and to the decision makers who have provided financial support, without whom none of this important work could have taken place.

For 2019, we wish to give a warm thank you to the following donors who have continued to support us strongly:

1. US Government through DRL
2. European Union
3. Swiss Government
4. Canadian Government through their embassy in Iraq
5. Norwegian Government
6. German Government through GIZ

## How to support us?

There are many ways for you to find out more or get involved with Asuda's work.

### **1. Donate**

Make an immediate difference by supporting us, this will allow us to help combat violence against women. Donate now!

### **2. Subscribe on our website Asuda.krd**

You can receive regular updates about our work and news from our partners around the world by subscribing to our website or Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/AsudaOrganization>.

### **3. Get social**

If you like our organization and work, please tell your friends on Twitter or Facebook!