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## **Statement: KRG condemns murder of Dua Khalil Aswad**

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) condemns the murder of Dua Khalil Aswad, aged 17, who was stoned to death on 7 April in the town of Bashika near Mosul, Nineveh governorate.

The KRG also condemns the killing on 22 April of at least 20 Yezidi workers, in an apparent act of retaliation by members of a Sunni Arab armed group.

The murder of Dua in a so-called honour killing is a tragedy for her family and the entire community in Kurdistan. There is no justification whatsoever for this crime. Dua's death and the subsequent retaliation against the Yezidi community are a reminder to all of us, as individuals and as a society, that we have to continue to fight against the violent and archaic mindset that sadly persists today.

The Kurdistan National Assembly (parliament) in 2002 repealed articles in Iraqi law which allowed for "honour" killings to go unpunished. Since then, there have been at least 40 convictions for such crimes in the Kurdistan Region, and at least 24 cases are awaiting trial. This illustrates both the extent of the problem and the concrete steps that the KRG is taking to address it.

All those who carried out or were indirectly involved in the killing of Dua must be brought to justice as soon as possible. Bashika, in Nineveh governorate, is not a part of the Kurdistan Region and therefore does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The KRG urges the Iraqi Federal Government to investigate and institute legal proceedings in the district where the killing took place, and it offers its full cooperation in this matter.

The KRG is also extremely concerned that Dua's killing was used as a pretext for persecuting the Yezidi community. We must all work together so that the ongoing violence and images of violence in parts of Iraq do not brutalise our society to the point where killing is seen as the easiest solution to disputes.

Changes to the law and much longer sentences on their own will not prevent killings. Cooperation between government institutions, NGOs and religious organisations is essential in our efforts. The KRG is grateful to NGOs and public figures who have spoken out against these recent killings. We must all work together to reduce violence and to increase tolerance of diversity.

**The Spokesman  
Kurdistan Regional Government**