

## #HELMSHURTS Story: Iraq

### **Sabrin, 14: When the Shot Wore Off**

Like so many Yazidi girls, on August 3, 2014, 14 year old “Sabrin” was abducted by ISIS in a premeditated attack on the religious minority. Along with her mother, siblings, and other close friends from her village, she was corralled by ISIS through a series of holding areas, and ultimately sold as a sex slave.

Early in her captivity, Sabrin was seen by a nurse. Terrified of pregnancy by her ISIS captor, she asked the nurse to give a birth control shot, good for 3 months. The nurse refused, out of fear of reprisals from ISIS. But the girl begged. Finally, the nurse relented, risked the wrath of ISIS, and gave the girl the shot.

Over the next few months, the girl was raped time and again. Tied to the bed. Tied to the wall so she wouldn't run away.

She secretly kept track as the months passed, constantly aware of the ever-shortening protection from the birth control shot.

Three months came and went. Then for four or five more months after that. She was raped. Sold. Then raped. Then sold. Then raped. Then sold again.

Ultimately, she was held captive by five different ISIS slavers.

Following the final trade, Sabrin was moved back to Iraq. Close enough to make a run for it, she escaped. Finally, after more than a year of captivity, she made it to safety. Though her mother and siblings were still in captivity, she was reunited with her father in a camp in Kurdistan.

But the marks of her ISIS torture remained: Abdominal and vaginal pain so severe she could barely walk.

Sabrin was forced to face that fear that she had been carrying in the months since that birth control shot had worn off: Might she be pregnant?

Despite the shame and humiliation of having to disclose the rapes and torture she endured to her father, and fear of seeking medical help from a male Muslim doctor, Sabrin made plans to see a doctor and secure a pregnancy test.

This was the last Laila was able to reach her, in late September 2015.

### **Underground Abortions**

Two women Yazidi activists have secretly been taking pregnant young women who have recently escaped ISIS sexual slavery to secure secret abortions. So far, we have reports of 10 such cases.

The women are simply given medication- no surgical procedure. They are held for a day or so for observation, then sent home without medical supervision. One woman nearly died from complications following the procedure.

But because this is so sensitive, most are reluctant to talk about it.