

The Opinion Pages | LETTER

# ISIS Crimes of Genocide

MAY 16, 2016

## To the Editor:

Re “U.S. Ponders: Who Imprisons ISIS Fighters?” (front page, May 12):

Two months ago, Secretary of State John Kerry acknowledged that the Islamic State is perpetrating genocide. American policy with regard to any captured ISIS fighters in Iraq must comply with the absolute obligations of the United States to take all steps possible to ensure that perpetrators of genocide crimes are punished.

Genocide prosecutions are important to deter and delegitimize ISIS atrocities. Genocide crimes include conspiracy to commit and direct public incitement, trying to commit genocide, and complicity.

All captured ISIS fighters should be investigated for genocide crimes, including crimes of rape, abduction and sexual slavery against Yazidi women and girls.

The United States has taken global leadership in ending impunity for genocide in the past. The United States brought the Darfur genocide to the Security Council, resulting in a referral to the International Criminal Court.

Important and particularly relevant in the context of ISIS, the United

States supported the government of Iraq in its successful prosecutions of Saddam Hussein-era perpetrators of genocide against the Kurds and the Marsh Arabs. In those trials, the Iraqi judges found rape as a constituent element of genocide, which is precisely what ISIS is doing in Iraq today.

Prosecution of ISIS crimes as genocide is both a legal and a moral obligation. American leadership to ensure that these prosecutions take place will reinforce the global values of diversity that ISIS is seeking to destroy.

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