



THANK YOU!

Statement by HAUKARI – Association for International Cooperation e.V., Germany

29th of January 2022

In the night from the 27th to the 28th of January 2022 the office and Youth and Culture Center in Kifri, run by the German based organization **HAUKARI**, was set on fire by unknown intruders. Fortunately, none of our staff members or the young people using the center was harmed. The meeting hall, the library and some administrative rooms were burnt down and severely damaged.

The HAUKARI Youth and Culture Center in Kifri is a public space. The building has been provided by the Kifri Municipality and is being used by numerous groups of young people and artists from Kifri for cultural events and exhibitions, music and arts courses, educational and social workshops, and leisure activities. The center is part of a larger project aiming at strengthening youth participation in the public debate and fostering dialogue among young people throughout Iraq. The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and covers activities in the entire German region including Diyala province.

Until now, there is no hint at the motives or affiliations of the intruders. The police and the *Asaish* of Kifri are investigating the case.

We extend our thanks to the investigators as well as to the Kifri Fire Department for their immediate and helpful response. We deeply thank the mayor of Kifri, Mr. Shamal Namiq Karam, the municipality of Kifri and the Regional Administration of German for their continuous support and the German General Consul in Erbil and his colleagues for their caring support. We also thank the artists and young people who have gathered today in Kifri in front of the Youth Center to show their support for our work!

We are overwhelmed by the messages of solidarity and support we receive from throughout the Kurdistan Region of Iraq by telephone calls, e-mails and social media posts and the supportive attention of media channels. Thank you!

HAUKARI has been working in Kurdistan Iraq and specifically the German Region for 25 years with Anfal survivors, women affected by gender-based violence, with displaced people, young people, and artists.

We will now immediately start repairing and renovating the office and the Youth Center and continue our work. We are in midst of the preparations for **the 3rd Arts and Peace Festival in Kifri**, which will take place **from the 21st to the 23rd of February 2022**. We invite all friends, colleagues, supporters to join us and the young people and artists from Kifri at that occasion!

For HAUKARI Germany and Kurdistan-Iraq: Mam Polla and Karin Mlodoch