

of waiting went in vain. Taimur refused to be interviewed because he was not happy with the way he was treated by the regional government. However, I never gave up and tried once more when he came back from the States for good in 2013.

Taimur had settled down in Smud camp (now known as Rzgary village). I met him in his house in the evening of 17th July 2013. Our talks started at 21hrs, and continued until one o'clock in the morning, and could do the main part of our work. We agreed on some other meetings until we finish the whole book, and thus we met two more times; on 30th August and 11th September in his house.

Meeting the guy in 2013 means remembering what had happened after twenty five years of the Anfal Campaign. Thanks God Taimur posses a video image memory. He could remember so many details and names that made the story very realistic and reliable. One thing I have to mention is; Taimur was still living in the agony of losing his parents and sisters. Therefore, I had to work hard to calm him down. Once he told that his heart is cut to two pieces, the other half of it is buried in the mass grave with his mother. Taimur is turned to be a heavy smoker and that is quite understandable.

By finishing the interview with Taimur, I had achieved the main goal in serving the darkest days in the history of my nations. Luckily I could meet five of the survivors and five books are either published or on the way to be released. It is worth to mention that there are six other men who could escape the shooting in the desert; they are Uzer, Faraj, Ramadan, Wahid, Hama Ali Alian and Anwar Tayar (the last two are not interviewed because they passed away while serving in the Peshmarga forces after their heroic escape). Ramdan's interview is not yet organized as a book yet, but I will work on it very soon.

Arif Qurbany

INTRODUCTION

I have been working on Anfal crimes for long years, collecting information, studying documents, meeting the families of the victims and interviewing the survivals of the mass-graves and even the headsmen of the overthrown regime of Saddam Hussein and eventually I could author several books on those genocidal crimes.

But I always felt that my work is incomplete because I could not get sufficient information on the mass killing of the women and children that happened in 1988, this is due to the fact that the four other eye-witnesses (Faraj, Uzer, Wahid and Ramadan) were all adults during the mass killing and they knew nothing about the massacring of the children. The only survivor among the children was a little boy under twelve called Taimur who was wounded and partly covered with the sand of the desert.

Miraculously, Taimur found a chance to escape, to bear bleeding and dehydration, to pass through the dark desert and wild animals, and avoiding military posts till finding a Bedouin tent where he was warmly received, welcomed, treated and protected. Taimur spent two years with that generous family before returning to Kurdistan.

In 1996, Taimur was taken to the United States by the Middle East Watch Organization and was given a refugee status. I was working hard to find for several years to meet him especially after reading a report written on him by the Human Rights Watch. I failed to meet him in Kurdistan and failed to persuade him to arrange the interview when he came back to our homeland in 2009, and thus thirteen years

danger and above all sandstorms may bury travelers within minutes. The little boy took all that risks and cut seven kilometers long. He was bleeding and starving, and of course he was searching for some drops of water!

Eventually, Taimur had seen a light coming from a tent. He got close to it, but he was attacked by dogs. He could calm down the dogs by his skill, and could turn the Bedouin man who opened his door and his heart for him to a life-time friend. This man, whose name was Ganim Alaisham, had told a Kurdish journalist who visited him in his place near the Iraqi border with Saudi Arabia that the adventure taken by Taimur at that dark night could never be taken by the strongest Bedouin man, he described the boy's adventure as a miracle.

The author, Mr. Qurbani had made an inclusive interview with Taimur, here in Kurdistan. The interview is very inclusive and very informative. The both men tried to discuss every details concern the life story of our hero from his childhood, the way he was taken with thousands of Kurds at gun point from different parts of Kurdistan to the heart of the desert near Saudi Arabia where trained troops started opening fire on children and women. In Taimur's case men were taken to different places to be killed separately. Six men within the adult groups could survive, stay alive, and make their way back to Kurdistan. Nevertheless, Taimur whose age was just fewer than twelve years; was the only survivors in the family groups who could make his way back home.

Taimur had spent two years (from 1988 to 1990) in the southern part of Iraq where he was protected and looked after by an Arab family. He learnt Arabic and made several good Arab friends and remained in contact with them during his staying in Kurdistan and also in the United States of America.

It is noteworthy mentioning what is the meaning of Anfal and how it became a dark face of genocide process of the Kurdish people. Anfal is a name that points to the eighth of Quran's 114 Suras. This Sura (or chapter) is composed of 75 Verses and almost all of them deal with the extremity with which you treat your enemy; they are about how and when to use extreme actions against the enemy, and thus Verse 60 states; (Prepare whatever force you can, to terrorize the enemy of God and your enemy).

FOREWORD

History is adorned with heroic stories. The nations are proud of their men and women who drafted amazing events by showing unique braveness and making unforgettable legendary stories that enlighten the road of glory to generations to come. Greeks are proud of Alexander the Great, Britain's of Nelson, and French people of Napoleon.

The Kurdish nation has also heroes to be proud of. They are proud of Saladin and his companions, proud of Peshmarga brave fighters who with simple arms challenged the fifth strongest army of the world.

Over and Above, we the Kurds have yet others to be proud of. They are simply those intrepid who challenged the headmen of Saddam Hussein and resisted the fire-squad troops. So far seven of the victims bore bleeding wounds and the risk of being caught again by the killing troops had made their ways out the mass graves.

Among those seven survivors there was a twelve years old boy called Taimur who made a history and became the greatest Legendre of all time. The determination, valor and fearlessness of this little boy are unique in the history. History does not contain another legendary story equal to that of Taimur. Taimur and his family were subject to mass killing by fire squad and immediate covering by bulldozers in the middle of Arabia Desert and under the darkness of the night. Taimur was shot twice from his back, his wounds started bleeding and he fainted as a result but as soon as he recovered, he made his way out of the grave stepping on corpses. His first attempt to make his way out had failed because the snipers were still around; he hid himself until they disappeared and made a long way in the most mysterious land in the world, in the desert.

The desert is the most difficult land to walk through, because of wild dogs that Saddam's troops had accustomed them to eat Anfal victims. Desert wolves, snakes and scorpions are exposing the same

With the Ba'ath Party coming to power, a process of Arabization of the southern parts of Kurdistan commenced and continued without easing. The process included the confiscation of Kurdish homes and properties, the deportation of Kurdish families, and the settlement of Arabs into their houses. Man can say that Saddam Hussein planned to wipe out the Kurds; he caused the demolition of 4,500 villages, forcing their inhabitants into collective towns and into remote areas in the south of Iraq in order to break their cultural identity. In so doing, almost all the villagers were deprived of their income and means of making their living.

In the later period of the Iraq-Iran war when there were no international observers in the region, the regime caused the bombing of several Kurdish towns with chemical weapons (in 1987 to 1988). In Halabja alone, more than five thousand people were killed and several thousands were badly wounded and diseased from the gases released; many of them are still suffering from chronic illnesses as a result.

In the same period of time the Anfal genocide operations started. The campaigns were carried out in open and arrogant fashion. Commanders such as Ali Hasan Majeed (Chemical Ali) were assigned to their positions and duties by laws passed in the parliament of the regime. Local headquarters were established in almost every Kurdish cities and towns, with large signs on the buildings that read: 'Anfal Operations Command'! Tens of thousands of regular troops and mercenaries were prepared to gather inhabitants regardless of age and gender, and to take them at gun points to Topzawa concentration camp for registering their names, and then to send them to the killing fields in west of Baghdad and the other parts of the Arabia Desert south of Iraq.

In April 1988, Taimur family and all the other residents of "Kulajo" village, including children and women were taken to be exterminated in the same fashion!

My friend, Arif Qurbani, the Author, has the full story of our legendary chap Taimur in Kurdish and I have the honor to translate it to English.

Abdulkarim Uzeri (The Translator)

- **At present time which date is written in your personal identity and passport?**

- The date written in those documents is not the correct one because few years after my survival and the registering paper were damaged by the overthrown regime of Baghdad, I was obliged to choose a date for myself thus I had chosen first of January 1976 my date of birth. This date is dealt with in my all documents.

- **Is it the right date?**

- What do you mean?

- **What I mean is; did you depend on reliable sources such as family records to determine your date of birth? Or did you ask one of your uncles to tell you that in the aftermath of your family tragedy?**

- No, nobody had any idea. I set the date on my own.

* **For what reason you did not ask the concerning offices or your close relatives?**

- I did not go to such offices. I don't believe that they would bother to keep the records of Anfal people. My uncles didn't have any idea either.

* **But you did not ask your uncles or your aunts either?**

- Sir, in the past time, the officials were putting first of July as a birth day for every new born even if the baby was born in the mid of winter. On the other hand it was rather difficult for the country-side people to go to the cities for immediate registration. Therefore, the real dates were not clear, and sometimes the year of an important incident was the only reminder of the child's birth year! As you know time has changed; the parents are informed by family doctors when the

Here Is the Interview of the Eyewitness Mr. Taimur

* **You are known as Taimur of Anfal, but what will you say if I ask you to introduce yourself to the readers of this book?**

- It is true that I am, somehow, known to the public. But to tell you the truth; the story of my life and the agony that I had seen in the Anfal Genocidal Process is more heinous to what is known publically. I ask the Great God to help me to remember the happenings as accurately as possible. I am willing to give the right image of what I had seen and to tell you things that had not been mentioned yet. I do my best to make the real story out of this interview.

* **Thank you very much. I also do my best to make the right story of your life, but tell me who is Taimur then?**

- Taimur Abdulla Ali is my full name, but I don't know my date of birth! One of the reasons for that is; I was a naughty little boy, and as my father told me long ago that one day I got a pair of scissors and chopped off my birth certificate to pieces. The day, month and year were mopped up, as if my destiny was determined to be a person of no-identity and to make Taimur of Anfal out of me.

- No, no I cannot and I don't want to, and I'm still living in those days but I don't want to deepen my tragedies.

*** If you ask yourself such questions will you hurt yourself?**

- Yes indeed, because my dear mother's birth certificate is kept in my uncle's house and till now I didn't dare to have a look at it for fear that I may not bear the pain.

*** I am awfully sorry I should not ask painful questions. I really wanted to take your memory back to the early years so that we may serve your history with more information and to show how your life and the life in the village was during your childhood and in the days of Anfal. As for now can we start with the day when you were taken by the Iraqi army?**

- I would like to ask you not to care about my agony. I rather want you to keep your style in narrating the Anfal stories. Actually I have read your other books and I learnt that they are good works to serve the history. In the mean time I gather all my courage to answer all of your questions and to be more helpful.

*** How big was your family my dear Taimur?**

- We were six people, I had three sisters.

*** At the time of turning your family apart, were they all shot dead and you could survive alone? Were you 12 years old? And can you recognize your sisters and your parents if their photos are shown to you?**

- Yes for sure. Even today I feel like living with them. Of course I can recognize their photos easily.

baby will be born months in advance, and in my case; I was around twelve years old when my family were taken to Anfal in 1988, so I chose the 1976 as the year of birth.

*** What was your dear mother's name?**

- Sara Muhammad Mahmud.

*** Where was she from?**

- The village of Kulajo.

*** Where was your father from?**

- From the same place.

*** During those days the marriage was often taking place between relatives or within the area where they lived. Were your parents relatives?**

- No, I don't think so.

*** Do you know the birth year of your father?**

- Yes, he was born in 1953.

*** How about your mother?**

- I have no idea.

*** Did you try to find out or you didn't want to know?**

- Sir, the questions that you are putting up to me, they had never struck my mind.

*** Why not?**

- Partly because I did not want to go back to that painful days of my family life?

*** Do you want to forget those days?**

nearby and the family could return soon as the troubles were solved. Naturally I was too young to remember the birth time and place of my sister Gelas.

* **Did you ever ask for the real reason to move and come back so soon?**

- Yes I asked, and the answer was tribal crisis about the agricultural lands with my father and grandfather. My grandfather had moved to Drozna village, but the problem was soon solved and we were relocated in our original place.

* **How big was Kulajo?**

- There were about forty five houses in that village.

* **Was there electricity in the village?**

- No there wasn't.

* **Was there a school in Kulajo?**

- Yes, there was; a primary school with six classes.

* **Were there religious schools or almshouse which is known as (Takia of the Sheikh) before opening the school?**

- No, there wasn't even a mosque in Kulajo.

* **How about the teachers, were they from the cities and towns around? Were there teachers from your village who got their qualification somewhere else, and then came back to teach at home?**

- No, to my knowledge there was not any local teacher.

* **Did you go to the school?**

- Yes I went to the village's school but only for two years.

* **Now, if you are a talented painter and you want to draw the painting of your family members; how do you want to draw them?**

- Can you make the question clearer?

* **I would like to know if you can remember the way they looked like.**

- As a matter of fact, I keep their images in my mind as long as I am alive. I can recognize their faces among millions of people. My father was a bit tall man with a fair skin and dark hair. He was wearing a big mustache. He looked like a real tribe man of Rogzayee Jaf that he belonged. I don't praise him as a father but he was really handsome and a gentleman. Concerning my mother, she had a brown skin with a small round face. She had a nice fair long brown hair. My sisters were looking just like my father; they had white skin with big eyebrows. The youngest one was too little to a real figure but she was a bit plumpish little girl.

* **Who was the oldest child of your family?**

- I was the first child. My sister Gelas came after me, Lawlaw was the second daughter and my little sister Snur was the last one.

* **Were you all born in Kulajo?**

- No, I was born in a village of Hawareberza, Lawlaw and Snur in Kulajo but not sure about Gelas's birth place.

* **Didn't you say that your parents were from Kulajo and lived there? So why were you born in Hawareberza? Why the birth place of your sister Gelas is not clear to you?**

- Well, just before my birth time, my parents had to leave Kulajo because of landownership disputes, the other village was

*** How did he get his educations? Was there a school in your village even during his childhood?**

- No, for sure not. There was not any school in Kulajo at that time. Most probably he went to school in the city of Kalar or elsewhere, but what's important to me is he could read and write.

- Did you ever ask him or your uncles where did he learn?

- No, never.

*** What was your father's profession?**

- He was a farmer?

*** How was your family's living standard?**

- Well, my father was the only person who worked in the family. He cultivated his land but presumably his income was not the best. Therefore, he moved to Kalar and worked there until his turn came to serve the Iraqi army. He didn't like to serve as a mercenary soldier of the regime, for that reason he left the city and came back to Kulajo. My father had told me that the reason he refused to carry weapon was the risk of being killed and leaving a fatherless family.

*** I understand that question was around the days of Iraq-Iran war!**

- I don't know with whom the war was going on because I only heard in the end of 1988 or the beginning of 1989 when I was in the southern city of Samawa that there was a long war between the two countries.

*** May I ask what is the first ever memory that you never forget?**

*** In case you were born in 1976, you should have reached grade five or six before being taken to Anfal.**

- That is right sir, but some years before the notorious Anfal, the school was closed because our village was coming under artillery shelling of the Iraqi army that was why I could not continue.

*** Can you remember the names of your teachers?**

- Yes I can remember the name of Teacher Hassan. I think that he was originally from Drozna village. There was another teacher from the nearby Sarkalat town but unfortunately I cannot recall his name. Hasan had inhabited in a collective settlement build by the Ba'ath regime after the end of Anfal Genocidal Operations and died there.

*** What was the number of your school class-mate pupils?**

- I think we were about 20 kids.

*** Can you remember any of their names?**

- I can remember Azad Atta. And the two brothers Saman and Sirwan Hussein, but they were both subjects to mass killing in the place from where I could escape. They were both shot dead in front of me. Apart of those I cannot remember any other names.

*** How was your performance at the school?**

- I was a clever pupil, and I was always praised by my teachers. Naturally I was a clever boy and my father was helping me a lot at home.

*** Was your father an educated man?**

- Yes, he was.

dear people, but as I grew older the fear grew more. I had to think of finding safe places and to listen to the sad stories happening to our nation and the ill treatment practiced by the overthrown regime.

My father and I were getting together very well. We kept remaining together even when we were going into hiding. Therefore the others were blaming my father for keeping a child with him; they thought that the presence of child may result in discovering their hiding places by the enemy. My father did not listen to them; he was taking me with him to anywhere and at any time. We were behaving like good friends. I liked that very much because I felt like an adult, like a trust worthy man and as for my part; I helped him a lot in the farming works and breeding animals.

As such, you can imagine that I would have enjoyed a happy family should the Iraqi regime left us living in peace. Our family was a lovely one; we all loved each other very much. I feel that despite of all the troubles created by the army and mercenaries we had spent a life full of love and respect. The family love was so great that made us tolerate all inconvenience caused by our enemy, therefore I reached to a conclusion that the family was a big challenge to the wicked will of the tyrant Saddam Hussein. You can understand the changes that happened to me and to my life after losing my lovely father and the rest of my family.

The agony of Anfal might have been bearable should I found my family safe and sound, after my survival from all that shocks. My pains might have been lesser should I found one member of family survived. It worth to mention that the Anfal crimes were never expected; I remember that my father dug holes round our house just to protect us from bombardment but never from the mass extermination of Anfal. I also remember that our people were determined to resist the army and the air-force attacks. In the most rememberable case I have seen the

- Yes, what had happened to me in Anfal and what I had seen by my own eyes are unforgettable horrors.

*** Actually I mean your memories as you were a little child or before being taken to Anfal systematic mass-killing.**

- Well I really remember lot of incidents that went on during my childhood; the way I behaved with my father and mother and the way I treated my little sisters. I remember the crimes of Ba'ath government when their military helicopters launched attacks on our village and killed innocent people; our uncle's car was burnt by those planes. I can still remember the image of burning another car type "pick-up", which belonged to a man called Atta Hamajan. I remember many photographic things but without remembering the dates.

*** Can you give a simple description of the life in the countryside after you had left Kalar? How was your life in Kulajo?**

- Of course I remember things of my childhood period. We were children of a very unlucky generation. Our life was full of tragedy. The villages were turned to the battle field between the Kurdish Peshmarga Fighters and the troops of mercenary and Iraqi army. When the head-lights of cars or tractors were seen by the army they started bombarding the area including our village. And in the next morning, the army was guided by the mercenaries to arrest people without any wrong doings.

Our lives were always endangered; there was no security for the Kurds, our houses and firms were subjects to the bombardment by war-planes, and distance artilleries. It was impossible to have a piece of mind or a night rest. The young people, in particular, had to live in hidden to avoid the army enlistment. Even during my childhood I had fear from many things like the nightmare of military attacks and losing your

- I mean those who had money and could afford buying it. But generally speaking the people were poor and they saved money for the necessary items.

*** Did Peshmarga made any interference with those who were keeping weapons at their homes?**

- No, in contrast they liked everybody to keep a piece of weapon so in case of their absence they could face the attacks of the Iraqi army and mercenaries.

*** Had it ever happened that the public and Peshmarga had fought together against the enemy?**

- It has not happened in our village because they had never such strength of quality and quantity to stop the army and in the meantime our people were used to avoid clashes with the army and mercenaries. The youth of our village were going in hiding when there were clashes in the near-by areas.

I remember one day in the evening, a confrontation had taken place between the Peshmarga and governmental forces in the nearby village of Surakala, my father, and my uncle Othman had climbed a little hill to see what was happening. What we saw was the blasts and glimpses of explosions hit the civilian and here I asked my father; "Dad what will happen if a bomb explodes near us?" my father wanted to ease my fear by saying that what we had seen were only thunders from the sky but they were really artillery blasts hitting the houses of poor people.

Eventually I could persuade my father and uncle to go home. But even at home my fear and anxiety were not relieved. My father had noticed and helped me to fall asleep but the blasts had soon disturbed my sleep; I had fear that they may hit our house as well. In the end I found my father asleep but his sleep did not last long for a big explosion had shaken our house and awaked everybody. My father jumped out of the bed, had a

Peshmarga fighters opening fire against a military helicopter that flying over our heads and that the plane responded by launching a rocket that hit a carpet which was hung near our house after being washed by my mother. The rocket cut the carpet to two pieces but thanks God there was no casualties.

As I heard from my parents and other elderly people that our village was targeted by our nation's enemies several times during the 20th century. The killing of innocent people, destruction of the houses and the looting the properties had started from the early days of British occupations of Kurdistan and the resistance of Kurdish people led by Sheikh Mahmud and then during the revolution of our people under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani in 1960s.

However the worst destruction and exterminations were done by Ba'ath Fascists in 1980s. I was old enough to realize how hateful the regime was and to what extent they hated my peaceful nation. They really turned our life to hell; I remember how difficult for adults to go for shopping in the city centers. They had to go through several check points as if you were crossing to another country. I also recall my father sayings telling me not to go with him to the town to avoid the wickedness of the Iraqi troops.

*** Did you have any weapon at home?**

- Yes sir.

*** What type**

- "kalashnikov"

*** Did the other inhabitants keep weapons as well?**

- Yes, but only the capable ones.

*** What do you mean by capable ones?**

- It wasn't only as but the whole inhabitants of the villages around were leaving their homes looking for places of a safer refuge between hills and mountains or at river banks. They were choosing places out of the reach of the Iraqi army. Some of us were heading to other villages which were far enough from the barracks or out of the reach of artillery shelling. However, the army troops and mercenary gunmen were coming closer then the civilians were leaving the area and waiting for their withdrawal. By doing so they could save their lives but not their properties which were often looted by the soldiers and mercenaries.

The Iraqi armed men were disloyal and ruthless; they were setting the houses of those poor people on fire after looting whatever their hand can reach. It is true that things are relative; in this case because the soldiers and mercenaries were so busy by collecting properties and taking animals of the villagers they left the deserted soldiers free. They simply could not spare time to arrest or shoot people. Because of the enormous looting the villagers were hesitating to leave their places. This was understandable; the family needs food, clothes and money to live on. Besides looting there was also burnt houses; many times I had seen those hard working people busy rebuilding their houses.

*** But when your people had realized that there was a wiping out military campaign what did they do?**

- This is a good question! We did not realize that there would be a final attack or which one of the repeated attacks will be the final one, and thus "by fits and starts" the process went on. -

*** Does this mean that you were not aware of what were happening to your neighboring villages?**

- That is right and justified; simply because our area and the Kurdistan were living in isolation. There was no free media to

look and came back to say that it happened in the place where we were watching the fights. My father had praised me for my correct imaginations. He said to the family that I was clever enough to save our lives. My father was always trying to describe me as a brave boy but I was not. And once more, before the family fell asleep the second explosion had happened; we all run into the house's shelter and I put my hands in father's hand in an attempt not to let him leaving us. But our shelter where we refuge ourselves in was wet because it was raining outside. I can remember very well that my mother went outside and brought a big sack of straw to absorb the wetness of the place and have us having some rest in a nice dry place.

Later on, we learnt that an artillery shell had hit our neighbor house that belonged to Rostam Hajji Hamaxan and that his wife and two of his children were killed, and another one was wounded. My fear grew more and more but I was not alone, indeed nobody in our house could sleep until the morning when the corpses of the victims were taken to the cemetery. I attended the burring ritual and saw the way they dug the graves and fare welled the dear loses. The whole inhabitants had left the village in that day for they feared more bombardment. They were all scared. I never forget the fear that thrilled me that night. We were expecting a massive attack of the army but thanks god that did not happen.

*** Had it ever happened that the whole people of your village or the area around left to safer places together?**

- Yes that had happened several times before; we all left together and came back only after becoming sure that there would not be any attacks.

*** Where did you all go in such cases?**

*** How about the aftermath of Halabja bombardment with chemicals? Were you aware of that heinous crime?**

- As for my part, I never heard about Halabja but I had got to know that the Iraqi government had used chemicals against civilian. Only years later when I was living with Arabs in Alaisham village in Samawa governorate, I heard about Halabja's tragedy.

*** After the circulation of the news of using the chemicals against you as civilians; how did you find the reaction of your people putting into consideration that you were just leaving your houses in case of troop's attacks?**

- We always feared what would be the next crime of the regime, but after hearing the news of poisoning people we became on alert our fear was bigger than before because you learnt that taking refuge in our traditional places was no more useful, and thus we found ourselves having two choices either facing death all together or leaving our villages and settling down in the cities. Going to the cities were not easy either because there was a risk of being detained by the military check points and in case of reaching the cities then the question of where to live and how to make your leaving would arise. Over and above we to leave in hiding in the cities because of the secret police activities and once you were arrested by military checkers or secret police you would have faced an unknown fate!

*** Do you know any family that had chosen that solution?**

- Yes I know some families who left but that was refused by the government and the Peshmarga because either side wanted the villagers to stay where they were.

inform us what was happening around us. Usually the media of the dictators' regime are used as the mouth-piece of the ruler. Over and above the villages were without electricity that means the people could not have television programs. It is true that there were radio sets but the problem was the lack of programs. We could only receive the PUK broadcasts but the quality was not the best because the regime was jamming the transmission.

Naturally the PUK radio was rather concerned about broadcasting the news of Peshmarga victories in the battle field and their policy was directed to raise the moral of the people and urge them not to evacuate their homes but I don't think that they were aware about the Anfal Genocidal Plans.

Actually the attacks of the army were not very effective in the beginning because they were leaving the area before getting dark and before facing the real attacks of Peshmarga. Shortly speaking the people got used to such maneuvers. But later on the rumors of using chemical gases were circulating among the public and the simple means of protections were also described. However, the fear of exposing to the chemical weapons was another nightmare besides the fear of killing innocent people and destroying their houses.

*** Who gave you instructions of how to protect yourselves from poisoning gases?**

- Nobody, but in general the people were aware of the multi crimes committed by the regime.

*** The Peshmarga were coming and going; did they ever give any useful instruction?**

- No, concerning the chemical weapons they didn't give us any advice but the people were mindful.

ready to shoot anything moving. The only expected way of survival was the attempts to reach the cities.

*** You say that the only hope of survival was heading toward the cities; did you do that?**

- Through some relatives, a mercenary head was asked to help us to reach the Smud camp of Kalar safely. Apparently the families who had decided to take that route agreed to hire three tractors and take (Telako way toward Kalar).

*** Were you taking your belongings with you?**

- Oh yes, we had taken the necessary things.

*** What have you done with weapon that you had kept at your homes?**

- As for our part; my father had hidden deep under the ground of our yard. Most probably the others did the same. Here I can remember that I asked my father not to without his gun but he told me that should be detained with gun they would treat us as Peshmarga. That was a truthful answer but what I have seen practically was the regimes gang did not make any differences between Peshmarga and lactating babies!

*** At what time did you leave your village Kulajo?**

- I can tell the exact time but it was at late night.

*** How far was Telako from your village?**

- It was just around fifteen minutes by car.

*** Well, the other people who chose settling down in the city; which way did they select?**

- When you left the village they were still busy preparing themselves and not ready to leave.

*** Does that mean that you were separated forever?**

*** Do you know families who left to a city and could survive?**

- Oh yes, among them was my uncles family. They could escape at night to the city of Kalar. They settled in a totalitarian camp of Smud but they had all survived. It is worth to mention that my uncle had sent after my father to follow suit and transfer his family but he refused. He justified his refusal saying that he would be recruited as soldier or a mercenary. There is yet another family moved to Kalar and they were not included in Anfal extermination.

*** Then why all the others did not follow suit?**

- For many reasons; among them the transfer was, as I had mentioned, against the will of Peshmarga. There were also night squads of mercenaries who were watching the exits and the entrances of the villages, towns and cities, they were simply looting and blackmailing the people. Over and above, none of us knew what was planned secretly by the regime because the time they collected all those innocent people there was an effective decree of general amnesty but it was only to cheat people. In general the majority of people thought that there would be only limited actions to satisfy their blood thirst.

*** I can understand that the people were passing through a critical time; could they decide what to do?**

- When the news circulated that our village and the whole area were strictly controlled by the army and different groups of mercenaries and that will attack us from everywhere, we became sure that there was no way to go to other villages. We thought the only way out was to move to a city around because there was no resistance or defense in our village. That was understandable since the army had blocked all the escaping way, besides the military airplanes were always over our heads,

All we could do was climbing on our roofs and wave with white flags as a sign of peaceful surrender.

We waited and waited but neither the army nor the mercenaries did enter our village. We packed our things and headed to the same village saying a final farewell to the unlucky Kulajo and heading once more to Mlasura.

* **How far was Mlasura from Kulajo?**

- I think it was about half an hour.

* **Half an hour by car or on foot?**

- By car sir.

* **Well then, the army did not enter your village?**

- No they did not. But apparently we went to the place where they were!

* **Why did you do so? And as far as we were willing to give up to the army why you did not stay in your village and waiting for them?**

- You know what! Most probably I cannot explain the amount of fear we had to suffer or the amount of confusion we lived in. the condition was just like the Day of Judgment; we were not able to distinguish between right and wrong or between good and bad. We did not know what to choose stay where we were or move to another place? We could not guess which way was preferable to wait for the army to come and arrest us or to go and surrender voluntarily?

I think it was a psychological game that because of the terror we lived in we liked to be within a big crowd! May be the idea was the greater the number of people gathering together the lesser the fear that faces each one of us. Besides, there was a rumor circulating saying that if the people go and surrender voluntarily to the governmental forces, they would be forgiven

- No we met again an hour later.

* **Did you meet them there in Telako?**

- No, we met where we left them in the same village.

* **So why did you return back?**

- When we arrived in there, we noticed that the army was very active. They were lightening the sky to see if people were coming in, should they find any they would have shot them. We stayed still in our places; put the engines and the head lights of the vehicles off to avoid being discovered by the army forces. We went to the place that was chosen by the mercenary boss, waited for him but he did not turn up. He was either scared to be caught by the army or he was not truthful with promises. Thus we took the way back home reloading the tractors and spending the rest of the night in our homes.

* **How long did this unsuccessful round trip take?**

- It did not take more than an hour as Telako was not far away.

* **Did you have a good night sleep?**

- I cannot tell you who could sleep and could not, but generally speaking people were exhausted and frightened in the mean time. I fell asleep to wake up in the morning only to start a new journey to another place called "Mlasura" which was a nearby village of twenty homes. They were kind enough to hospitalize us all together but in different houses. We stayed there for two days only because we had left our places without taking our furniture and we did not want to over work them. That was the reason to go back to Kulajo in a hope to bring our necessary things including food stuff and warm blankets. But there was yet another disappointment; we found our village coming under bombardment and before waiting long the ugly army arrived.

- As a matter of fact the fear was the same no matter where, when or how you surrender yourselves to the evils but the crowd gave us a better courage.

*** Did the army came in straight ahead or started besieging the village?**

- They did not enter the village. In fact some villager men went to see them but they were received by a mercenary boss who assured them that the government's amnesty enacted. And he also told the people his government had built a house for every citizen with water and electricity supply. The men were convinced and told the people what they were by the mercenary leader.

*** This means that men had trusted the regime's promises told by the mercenary head?**

- Yes they had and the people also reacted very happily. They reacted as if they have survived the death penalty. Before that promises we were very frightened. Nobody knew what will happen to us and of they gathered in Mlasura hoping to get a way out for everybody. That news relieved us from the life threat, the threat of being hit with chemical weapons. Indeed I could the relief and happiness on the people's faces.

There was a good indication in favor of the government because those who went to Smud camps were given houses and were left to settle down and that happened in some other places. Believe it or not that message made people so happy as if they were rewarded! And thus the people did not want to waste anytime they collected their belongings and put them on their tractors and pick-up cars (most of the villagers of that time were in posses of tractors). They all headed towards Kalar. There were a big numbers of tractors driving toward the city. The occasion looked like a wedding ceremony when the vehicles were exceeding each others. Telling the truth if the army would

and will be dealt with in a different way. This rumor was pretty strong in Mlasura especially when we were there for the second time. Actually many other villagers had gathered there and they were repeating the same rumor. We stayed in Mlasura for three days and the crowd became incredible. The place became the gathering point of the most of Garmian villagers.

*** Why did all these people gathered there? Did they think that Mlasura is a gate of survival?**

- I really do not know why Mlasura became a gathering point? Was it because of its position as a cross-road between the other villages or because of its geographical situation near the city o Kalar!

There is yet another possibility; that was as I think the regime had made propaganda between the people saying that the government will give the amnesty to the crowd! By doing so they could arrest the biggest number of people without the headache of chasing anybody anywhere.

*** Within your speech you mentioned that you remained for three days in Mlasura in your second visit; what had happened to you then?**

- In the third day we have seen a big number of military troops and mercenary troops gathering near the village and they were heading toward us!

*** What was the time when you noticed that the army was coming?**

- It was late in the afternoon.

*** What was your respond especially you had less fear as you were in a bigger number?**

* **Who was escorting your tractor a soldier or a mercenary?**

- An Arab Soldier.

* **Where was he standing in the trailer or with you in the cabinet?**

- He was standing in the rear part of the trailer with one foot in and the other one on the door, and a hand on his gun.

* **How long did you travel by that tractor?**

- Until Koratoo.

* **How far was Koratoo from Mlasura?**

- I cannot tell the exact distance, but it must have been about two hours.

* **You said that the army arrived late in the afternoon, at what time did you arrive in Koratoo?**

- As I told you that some men went to speak to the army commanders and that took some time before leaving the village. However, it was getting dark when we reached Koratoo.

* **What was Koratoo if you can describe it?**

- Koratoo was a large village turned to a totalitarian camp by the regime. And there was also a big barracks built like a fort to guard the settlement. The fort was used as a prison for Garmiani detainees. We were kept there until the next move to Topzawa.

* **When the road to Smud changed to Koratoo, did you ask the mercenary boss the reason of that change?**

- Believe me all the way long the people were thinking about new houses and starting new life. Above all, they did not register any names and did not search for any weapons; these

not cheat the people, there would have been great chances to survive in Mlasura. But who would realize a powerful like Baghdad's was going to cheat its nation?

* **So the crowd made their way towards Kalar using tractors and cars; were you accompanied by troops and mercenaries?**

- Not only mercenaries and troops but the whole area was covered by tanks, armor-clad vehicles and armored cruiser. Over and above, the military helicopters were flying over our heads.

* **What about the troops and mercenaries?**

- You mean the types of weapon that they were carrying?

* **No, I mean their types of transporters.**

- They had plenty of vehicles filled with mercenaries and troops, and because the civilians did not have enough transporters, the pedestrians were ordered to get on Lorries (type Eva made in East Germany). We were escorted by the army; there was a land cruiser with each tractor and a soldier on each civilian car or tractor to watch any movement of the villagers.

* **Which place did you take on the tractor?**

- I was right beside the tractor driver, next to my uncle Omer who was the owner of it. My father and two of his friends were with us in the cabinet. I remember one of my elderly aunties was with us in the trailer; she was only separated in Topzawa to be sent to Nugra Salman Prison. She was freed few months later but when she found that all her family members were massacred, she got a mental disarrangement and passed away soon.

five or six? The answer that I fabricated for myself was; yes of course it was not your mistake when they closed down the school of your village. Yes you can resume your schooling education and you must take your sisters with you as well. “We need not fear helicopters because they don’t come to bombard camps run by the government” I was saying to myself very often. Nevertheless, all these dreams were invalidated when we passed by Smud camp and saw that women were crying for us, and thus I was deprived from my immediate hopes, from going to school and from practicing a new life in Smud camp.

When our convoy passed by Kalar, we have seen the same view of women crying for us. A new fear was planted in my heart; those women were not crying for us without reasons, they must have known what would happen to us.

* **When you arrived in Koratoo, did you found other people taken there by the army?**

- It was crowded with troops.

* **What I mean is; were they civilian like you?**

- No, we were the first group to be taken there. Nobody could guess what will happen to us but the fear of unknown fate was featured on our faces without exceptions. What had added to our fear was the size of the fort built by the regime in Koratoo. The view was terrifying me; I had never seen such a huge thing in my life, never seen a building with such a big yard and so many floors. Our houses in our village and also in other villages were small and flat on the ground. As a matter of fact the building materials of our houses were only good for one floor building.

Our convoy was composed with a very long line of tractors but when they gathered all of us in the yard, they were too little to that big yard and could occupy only one corner of it, and thus there was, yet, a big space for the others that were brought in

were all indications that we will be accommodated in new places.

Things seemed normal until we passed by Smud Camp without stopping there! Besides we have seen Kurdish women by the road sides crying out in grief and wailing. Here many questions arose in our mind; where do they take us? Why those women are lamenting? Why did they pass by the camp without saying anything? The fear started dominating. We, somehow, became sure that the government was violating the amnesty decree and breaking the promises of starting a new life. The only thing that eased our fear was the great number of people pushed into the convoy; nobody could imagine that the government will ever punish such big crowd of women and children; especially there were a number of deserted soldiers who were not checked by the military police. This a logic question on itself; if they don’t check for violative people what a hell they do with new born babies.

Speaking about deserted soldiers was a nightmare on it is own. My father was one of them; I could not tolerate the idea of being separated, I was thinking of going with him as an appeal of sympathy that he was fathering children, four children! And should they enlist him as a soldier, who will look after his wife, his son and his three little daughters? I was often praying humbly to God to save my father’s life.

When we were in Mlasura we feared death penalty, especially when we were controlled by the army and mercenaries. I was still in that little village when I was disappointed and lost hope to stay alive. But after the meeting with mercenary chef and listening to his words that we will be taken to settlements to have new houses; a new hope had revived in my mind, mixed with dreams of going to school and getting enough qualification to study in one of the big cities. The question that I was putting up to myself would they let me to start from the second class while my friends are now in class

economize it especially the number of detainees was growing continuously, over and above there were no facilities for storing water.

* **Who was patrolling you while you were in Koratoo?**

- We were in a military barracks; the area was crowded with soldiers.

* **What was the color of their uniform?**

- Slightly green.

* **What type of weapons were they carrying?**

- Some of them were carrying AK-47s but there were soldiers with different duties like registering names or checking wanted peoples, carrying pistols. But that was not all because there was a hell of helicopters, tanks, armored vehicles and heavy guns.

* **Were the mercenaries allowed to make contacts with your people in Koratoo?**

- No, that happened only in Mlasura.

* **How was the way of patrolling?**

- Well the building was a very giant oval-shaped fort with towers for patrolling. There were also a number of soldiers guarding the gates where people were brought in but they were keeping away from people inside the fort, their entry was allowed when they were bringing water or similar things in. Otherwise they were distanced from us.

* **Were you in contact with the outside world?**

- It was limited to the news told by the new comers. Only through those people who were brought in from different villages and districts. We could know what was happening to

during our stay in that horrible fort. The building was designed to imprison the whole inhabitants of that district.

We were all shocked and we did not have a lot to say. We were all looking around but deep inside everybody a correct idea and that was that giant fort was made for bigger number of people and the bigger number of defenseless Kurdish were brought in.

* **Once you were taken in, did anybody check you?**

- No, I do not remember any checking but what I remember is the gates of the fort were widely open for the cars and tractors to enter freely.

* **For how long were you kept there in Koratoo?**

- Around ten days.

* **How was the food supply during that period of time?**

- Food! There was no food at all; they were only bringing tanks of water.

* **How could all that women and children survive that long without food?**

- This is a good question. The answer is the people had brought with themselves some food stuff and other necessary things that they would need it until settling down in the city of Kalar. The people have left the things they could not carry them easily such as cupboards and mattresses. Some had brought their animals with them but they were taken by the armies and mercenaries as soon as they could put their hands on. On the contras the Kurdish families were distributing their posses on those who could not bring enough food with, and thus the ten days that we spend it in Koratoo passed without food shortage but the water that they have brought for us was not sufficient so we had to

Probably the way he would have chosen to escape was to get off from the rear-wall of the fort because as I remember the back side of it was empty, however this hadn't happened and I never asked him about his plans.

*** During your ten days in that fort, did the army transfer any group to any other place?**

- No, not during the first ten days. I think that period of time was specified to collect as much people as possible because they were pushing in new comers day and night. The other face of the story started on the day eleven when they brought in Tipcart Lorries type MAN. As we were the first group in the fort, we were first candidates to be taken away. As I told you that there were soldiers carrying pistols and going around to register the names and because our names were at the top of the list, then we were the first group to be out on the tippers. As a lorry takes more people than a tractor, there were people from other groups loaded with us.

*** What was the time when the tippers were brought in?**

- Just before noon.

*** How was the process of the transportation?**

- Groups of people were lined up; when a group was on the back of the vehicle, then another group was ordered to get on the next one.

*** Was the number of the vehicles enough for all those people in Koratoo fort?**

- I neither know the number of the cars nor the number of the people gathered in Koratoo but the crowd was incredibly big. I have also doubt that all the detainees were transferred in one day. Another more evidence was that when we were in

our people and how many other villages were destructed in the area around. Thus were getting bad news on daily bases.

*** Were their people trying to escape?**

- I never heard of any attempt of escaping but there were opportunities to do so.

*** How on earth anybody could escape among all those forces in that secured fort?**

- Naturally my way of thinking at that time was not realistic; I was not an adult and did not think of making a plan whatsoever. However, I rather recall what I heard from others. My father, my uncle and I were often getting on the roof of the castle to look at the new crowd heading in, and I also remember my father speaking to my uncle telling him that he would have easily escaped should he was a single man!

*** What was the name of your uncle who was detained with you?**

- He was uncle Othman the brother of my mother.

*** Do you mean that your father could show your uncle a way to escape from the roof of the fort?**

- I have no idea about the way that he could run to safety but he was talking about that when we were alone to avoid being heard by others. Somehow I felt sorry for my father because he missed a chance of joining my other uncle when we were still in our village. He did not do that as he didn't want to serve in the army or to be killed in defending a regime that he hated. But when we were gathered forcefully in Koratoo he had worried about his big family. In another meaning; he did not want to save his life and leave the fate of his family in the hands of his enemies.

*** Apart of being accompanied by military cars were there soldiers in those Lorries?**

- Yes there was a soldier guarding each lorry, standing by the rear door carrying a gun in his hand.

*** How was the gun carried?**

- The gun's belt was hanging round the soldier's neck with his finger on the trigger and the muzzle pointed at us.

*** Did you have such experience before? Have you ever been in front of soldiers?**

- No never before. Remember that I told you about the patrolling to Mlasura and that was there a single soldier standing by the rear door of the trailer and that I was standing in the driver cabinet far away from the soldier.

*** Were you afraid from the soldier?**

- Actually the fear was born with me. Our lives were threatened from the early days of our childhood. I had never had a piece of mind. Stories of the threat of barbarian army and rascal mercenaries were dominating our thoughts. Children of our age were enjoying kinder-garden and school education, their mothers were telling them fairy stories to fall asleep but our sleep was often disturbed by distance artillery shelling targeting our houses. The Iraqi soldiers were instruments of killing rather than the protectors of the country. A soldier was an angel of death and of course I was scared to meet him.

*** Do you think that the others were sharing your feeling?**

- I don't know about the men's feeling but fear was visible on the faces of women and children. We were afraid that the soldier may press on the trigger at any time.

Topzawa's horrible camp, there were more and more people brought in on daily bases, and thus I am sure that it took some days to empty that big fort of Koratoo. It is not excluded that there were people brought to Topzawa from other areas of Kurdistan.

*** Did it take a longtime to put you on the tipper?**

- If you only mean one lorry then it took about five minutes only. But if you mean all of them then it definitely took much longer.

*** How was the start? Did the vehicles move together when they were ready?**

- Well it was arranged this way; they were bringing a number of tippers enough to load the separated groups, and the loaded ones were going out to let the empty ones come in. Thus when the number becoming enough to make a convoy then the journey would have started.

*** What about all those tractors that the people brought them from Mlasura to Koratoo?**

- We had left all of them in Koratoo.

*** You left them voluntarily?**

- We were prisoners. We were packed in Lorries and taken away without even being told what the destination was! We were only subjects under soldiers' disposal.

*** You were under the patrolling of mercenaries and military troops during your transfer from Mlasura to Koratoo; was it the same when you were taken to Topzawa Concentration Camp?**

- No there was a difference. The role of the mercenaries was until the gate of Koratoo fort.

* **What was the time when you arrived in there?**

- Just about half an hour before the sunset of that day.

* **How did Topzawa Camp look like to you?**

- Topzawa was a hell on earth! A very spacious barracks, it was fenced all around and there were an unaccountable number of halls. The halls were big enough to use for winter sport games and there was also big open spaces here and there; they were all packed with people. Once I got off from the lorry I could see a crowd ten times bigger than that of Koratoo. The place was crowded that the vehicles had to leave the place soon they were emptied.

Believe it or not; I thought that the whole Kurdish nation was gathered there in that concentration camp. I did not know where the others were brought from but the group that arrived few minutes after us were brought by buses not by Lorries. The whole place was so packed that made our movement very limited. Men, women, children, young girls and young boys were all packed there, and in the mean time a great number of soldiers were engaged in checking and registering the names of the poor people. They also separated men from the families.

* **How was the process of separating men from women?**

- The crowd was divided to several groups; there were working teams sitting behind desks in front of every group. We were asked to line up in long queues in front of the desks; we were then asked about our ages, after that, different categories were sent to different halls. There halls for elderly people, for women and children, and for men as well. I was classified with families and remained with my mother and sisters but my father and uncle were put within the group of adult men. My grandmother was put in a mixed group of adult people.

* **Were the escorting soldiers the same who brought you to Koratoo from Mlasura?**

- I am not very sure but I think the uniforms were a bit different.

* **How about your own luggage and other necessary things? Were you allowed to take them to Topzawa?**

- When we moved from Mlasura to Koratoo we prepared ourselves to get new houses, therefore we had packed and taken lot of things but we were disappointed and the idea of new houses invalidated when we were kept in that horrible fort, and when they packed us in those trippers we took only very few things and the rest were left behind.

* **So how was that fearful and mysterious journey to Topzawa?**

- The most significant thing that I remember was my sister Gelas had drunk some kerosene instead of water and suddenly she fell sick and started vomiting. Her situation was alarming. Therefore, my father stopped the lorry by tapping the roof of the drivers' cabinet. Once the lorry stopped the whole convoy stopped, too.

Fortunately, there was a clinic of a military barracks in the area and my father took her and had got some first aid, and came back very soon. But the other people took the advantage of stopping the convoy to get off the cars and started walking around. That alarmed the escorting troops who started shouting and pushing the people back to their vehicles. Here I worried very much that they may accuse my father of creating troubles.

* **How long was the way between Koratoo and Topzawa?**

- It took about three hours drive for our convoy.

father's hand for the last time in my life. This was the moment when I saw for the first and last time teardrops coming down from my father's eyes! My father was a type of who never showed weakness but not that time; I think he was crying deep from his heart.

I was forced back to join my mother and three little sisters. I was very nervous that is why I hold my mother's clothes tightly, looking at my father taken at the gun point to a special hall. I had a look at my mother and saw that her eyes were full of tears. My sisters were scared to death, they wanted to cry for our father but they were scared to do so but they were sticking to my mother's lower limbs as if they were making an appeal to stop further separations.

My sisters were silently expressing their fear and their impression of those wild soldiers, but I had a different feeling from my sisters and mother; putting my father's opinion into consideration I had to act like the families guardian once we were freed and left managing our live. I had also fear that they may isolate as from my mother the way they had taken my grandmother from us.

We needed not waiting long to head toward a box-like hall set for packing children and women in it. At that particular point I looked at my father heading toward his gathering place, he too, turned round and we exchanged the last look in our lives. That was one of the saddest moments in my life.

*** Apart of your father did you know anybody else who was separated?**

- Yes I remember almost all those who were brought with us from Koratoo.

*** I mean your relatives and family friends.**

- Yes, my uncles Omer and Othman any many good neighbors from our village were taken with my father to the same place

I could not bear to be separated from my father; I run toward him and caught his hand firmly. My father responded by giving me fifteen Iraqi Dinars saying: "Son! Keep this money you may need it". I think that was the capital of our family.

My father said so because he could not believe that the Patriotic and Progressive Government of Baghdad will also massacre women and children. I remember him telling me that once we are in a city we would need some money to spend. My father was right that he would be separated for ever but was not pessimistic to a degree to think that his children too, will be exterminated! I don't blame my father for a wrong calculation. I think every normal person would have thought that way. It was the rulers of Baghdad who had lost their human sense and behaved like evils.

*** How was your expectation when you were separated in Topzawa?**

- You see we were kept for ten days in the fort of Koratoo we were optimistic that we would freed in few days time but once we saw that men were separated and taken at gun point to different halls, there was no room for expectation that they remain alive. I think anybody in the camp who had seen that situations would have lost hope to see those men alive again! The uncertainty about our lives as women and children started casting as well. As for my part I was not sure that we would be freed at all especially when we were forced into special halls after registering our names. Nevertheless, the worst calculation was our banishment to live in exile; I mean to live in Arabic cities and towns until we lose our national identity. Most probably my father had imagined the same fate when he gave some money to spend it in (would be) our new residential place of living.

My greatest disappointment came after being pulled from my hand by a very hateful soldier when I had shaken my

even during the fire squad at the pit of the mass-graves. Generally, only men were searched.

* **How big the hall was? I mean how many detainees were in a single hall?**

- All I know the hall was very big and that we were packed like Sardine Fish in a tin.

* **How many halls were, all together, in that camp?**

- The camp was so spacious that I could not see the other end of it, and could not count the halls either. All I can tell is that every hall was enough to take the inhabitants of several villages. I think they were planned to gather the hall Kurdish nation and exterminating them in Grand Arabia Desert.

* **Was the hall occupied before taking you in?**

- Oh yes. It was full, that is why they had to push us in.

* **Did you know any other people in that hall?**

- Do you mean among those who were there earlier or within our group?

* **Both of them.**

- Yes of course, we were a group of relatives and family friends together. We came from the same village and we were not separated until the adult men were taken to another hall but I didn't know anybody from those who were there before us.

* **Was there a name registration in the hall?**

- No, not inside the hall. The names were registered outside of the halls and our names and the name of my mother were written once again before entering the hall. I think they wanted to know how many people will be packed inside each hall.

and in the mean time several families from Kulajo were torn apart with us. May be it's too early to tell but those people were all killed together, my granny was the only survivor. She was within the elderly people who were put in a different hall and were taken to Nugra-Salman Prison to be starved and tortured until death; only few of them had survived and brought back to Kurdistan but it was too late for their ages and sufferings.

* **Can you remember the way your father was dressed?**

- Oh yes, he was in Kurdish folk dresses with a big belt and also a Kurdish head wears (klaw and Jamana).

* **How about your mother?**

- She was also in Kurdish folk dresses with a white head-cover. My sisters were dressed in Kurdish children dresses.

* **And yourself?**

- I was in a shirt and a Kurdish pair of trousers called (Sharwal).

* **Were you allowed to take any of your belongings to the halls?**

- When we had left the transporters we were taken to the registration desks. We were checked there, even our pockets were searched and the contents were all looted. There was a box behind the soldiers everything was put in it but without issuing any receipt for them, and thus we were taken to the halls without our belongings.

* **Were children checked too?**

- No I was not. I was carrying a nail-cutter and a small glass marble; I had taken them with me. They were in my pocket

*** Have you seen your father after being separated? Did you look for him through the windows?**

- No never. I could not see him again although I looked for him a lot, I was really looking for him through the windows and whenever I had a chance to go out of the hall. His separation made me sad and depressed. It worth mentioning it that whenever I looked outside I could only see shocking views; soldiers were kicking old men. Such behaviors were against our traditions and values. My parents and even children of my age were used to show a great respect to elderly people. Gray hair meant respect to us but I had seen several times the old men were trailed along on the ground from their gray beards. Once I saw a very old man lagging on a crutch attacked by a soldier who took his stick from him and hit his back with it and the poor man fell on the ground!

I cannot understand which sort of education had those soldiers got? Hadn't they got mothers and sisters? Didn't they have elderly people in their families?

*** Could you recognize any relatives or neighbors when you were looking through the windows of the hall?**

- No, not through the window but once on my way to the rest room, I saw a guy from Kulajo his name was Ali. I was very pleased to see him. I went to him and asked him if he had seen my father! His answer was no and I started crying. My mother and sisters cried too when they heard my story.

*** How many days did you stay in Topzawa?**

- I cannot tell you exactly how many days or how many weeks because we did know about the dates or the days of the week but after staying for relatively a long time, our family with some

*** Were there guards inside the halls as well as outside?**

- No there was nobody inside the hall but the camp was heavily guarded all around. Wherever I looked I could see armed troops watching the whole area.

*** How was the uniform of those guards?**

- There were different colors; I could see green, brown and khaki uniforms. I only knew later on that each color represented a different army unit such as Commandos and Special Forces.

*** How was the food and drink in Topzawa Camp?**

- In such crowded place it was not easy to get your portion no matter if the food good or bad. However, what we were given was either the leftover from the soldiers or a piece of bread with a glass of water. But our greatest problem was the usage of water-closet. We were locked inside and we were not often allowed to go to the toilet and once we were allowed we became a subject for humiliations by the soldiers. Many times we were ordered back before reaching the right place. Actually I had noticed many children lost their control. That situation made the life impossible in that stinky hall. I think they did so to hurt us as much as possible.

*** Could you look through the windows?**

- Yes, some times.

*** What could you see outside?**

- We could see a lot; we saw whatever was happening in that horrible camp. We could see that new groups were brought one after one and the men were separated from their families, we also saw the men were taken away with their hands eyes tied with their belts or head covers. They were taken to the unknown destinations by convoys of buses with sealed windows.

*** When you were moved from Topzawa what else have you seen that you haven't yet mentioned? Was there anything else that drew your attention?**

- The whole things there were new and were drawing my attention. I could not imagine that the government possessed all that capacities and power but they are all used against her people or to exterminate tens of thousands of innocent people. Many things reminded me with my father's answer to his brother when he asked him to join him in a governmental camp in Kalar saying that he could never trust the Iraqi regime because man can never guess what their next step would be!

Many others had told us about the savageness of Saddam Hussein, but the real nature of the man and his gang cannot be described by anybody in few lines. The longer we stayed in Topzawa, the more ugly behaviors to see, the more primitive people to meet. One question was always repeating in my and that was why the Kurdish people were so kind to them? I remember very well the Arab soldier fallen as prisoners to Peshmarga they were brought to our village Kulajo and were hospitalized by our people. They were considered as guests not enemies fallen in captivity.

It is worth to mention it that in our last days that the children of age were forced to clean the toilets and the kitchens and was using that opportunity to get closer to my father's hall to see any trace of him. One day I saw a huge pile of Kurdish men's wear and wrist watches this meant that some the detainee were taken away in their inner dresses only. If I ever had a chance to search the piles I might have found some of my father's belongings.

On another occasion, while working in the kitchen, I saw a plate with vegetable soup and meat, the soldier who was standing their told us that who could run faster will get that dish as a reward; I was the winner and tried to take my reward but the soldier hit the plate with his foot and turned it over, and I

other people was taken to another hall. We stayed there for some days before being taken to the desert.

*** Were there other relative families transferred with you to the new hall?**

- Oh yes, there was my aunty (Masooma) with ten Children, my uncle Othman's family, my other aunty (Hamdia) and several acquainted families.

*** Was the new hall similar to the other one?**

- Yes, they were both the same. I had also had a look at the one into which my father was taken; I found no difference.

*** Was food as bad? Was the access to the water closet restricted?**

- There was no difference whatsoever concerning such facilities but the soldiers showed their permissivity more clearly! Imagine that there was a young pregnant women in that hall who was about to give birth to her baby. She was in pain. She was screaming and asking for help! Some stupid soldiers came and started making fun on her. They used the muzzles of their gun to undress her and look at her genital organs. They were making laughter and queuing up to look in between her legs. At that moment I looked at the other women in the hall; they were horrified and crying silently.

*** What impression did those soldiers carved in your memory?**

- Their pictures are still in my mind, I always remember them as the ugliest creatures I have seen in my life. They were really wild beasts.

* **were the drivers civilian?**

- We could not see the driver but all in all they were soldiers and in Khaki uniform. I think all of them were specially trained because look very fit. I have to tell you that before reaching the shooting place, I saw the driver leaving his car; he was in similar uniform.

* **How was their arrangement to get on the cars? Did they call your names?**

- I cannot remember well but I don't think that they called anybody by name; they just gathered groups big enough for one car and then when the car became full it would moved forward and stopped to wait for the rest of the convoy. Such was the arrangement until enough victims were packed in.

* **Can you tell me what the place of your vehicle in the line of the convoy was? Was it in the middle? What was the total number of the cars? Can you tell me how people were left behind when you got on?**

- No honestly I cannot remember any of that number but there was people got on before and there were many others waiting for their cars.

* **Were all of you, I mean, you, your mother and sisters together in that car?**

- Yes we were.

* **Were their other people known to you?**

- Oh yes there was my aunty Masooma with her ten children, my uncle Othman's children and many others. Actually there was a lady from our village that I have not seen her in the hall but she was on the same car. The mother who gave birth to the child was with as but she was very ill. I remember that my aunty had open a little bottle of water, poured some water into

missed a chance to take some fresh food to my little sisters and my mother. I only mention these facts to see the difference between the way we dealt with them while they were captivated by Kurdish Peshmarga, and the way they showed their disloyalties to us.

* **Was their another registration process of your names before taking you to the desert?**

- No, there was not.

* **When did they take you away?**

- One day in the morning, some cars were brought in front of our hall, they were sealed and their colors were white and green.

* **Do you mean that the cars were in mixed color white and green?**

- No, I mean some of them were white and some others were green. They looked like ambulance cars (I was not familiar with ambulances at that time but later on I saw them and was told that they were called ambulance to transfer patients not prisoners). The vehicles were long and wide; I had never seen such cars before. And as for my part I had never seen such cars in any country or on TVs. Those cars haven't been seen after Saddam Hussein's fall either; he might have destroyed them before his regime's collapse in an attempt to diminish the evidences of the mass killing.

The cars had one door on the right side and another inside it. The one inside was on rail to make more space for the detainees. Once we got in we had to sit back to back.

* **How many cars were prepared for you?**

- I don't know the number but there were too many of them waiting in the line.

- Nobody in particulars but the rumor came from other women in other halls when they met each other in the washing rooms.

* **In the morning of the catastrophic day were you given breakfast?**

- No, not at all. The soldiers gathered us early in the morning before breakfast time.

* **Could anybody in your group guess what would happen to you on that particular day?**

- Not really. Remember when we were moved from Mlasura we were told that we will be taken to a residential camp but we found ourselves in a military barracks, then we were transferred to Topzawa concentration camp with being given any information. Our last day didn't look to be different from the other days; nobody told us a word.

* **But there were some different signals; you were taken to Koratoo fort by your own tractors, and then to Topzawa by civilian tippers but now in different buses that have no windows. Didn't that make some difference to you?**

- Certainly we were terrified. We were expecting to be taken to a worst place but never to the pits of mass graves. Actually the car was like a portable grave, it was hot and dark. We could hardly breathe because there was no airing system. The whole car was sealed. We could not see the outside world.

The heat and lack of fresh air started alarming; two children lost their lives, their mother just left them on the floor. They too, were exhausted, motionless and waiting to die beside them. Although the children were about eight and nine years old there was no wailing or lamenting for them, simply because we were all breathless. That was the time when man could feel that life has no value; young children might die because of lack of

the lid and asked me to moisture her dry mouth and I did. The women opened her eyes and thanked me for the drops of water that made her a bit fresher.

* **Were there boys of your age?**

- Yes there were four sons of my aunty Masooma their names were (Sardar, Kamal, Jamal and Shamal). They were also schoolmates and friends. Our cousins (Karim, Saman and Sirwan) were sons of my uncle Othman. There were also girls and boys of my age but I was not acquainted with him.

* **How many people were packed in your car?**

- I cannot remember the number, but it was full or equal to the number of the seats or even more because there were no seats for babies, and thus it was overcrowded.

* **Do you know who the youngest child was?**

- There were lactating babies around three months old

* **Were there young girls with you?**

- Yes there was my aunty who was a single girl and there was also a family with a young girl who remained with us in the group and in the car?

* **As you are the only survivor among the families and you were with young girls; I would like to ask a documentary question: Were there young girls being separated from their families?**

- When we were in Topzawa halls, a rumor circulated that the young girls will be separated and freed but that had not happened.

* **Who told you that the young girls will be separated?**

by their poor mothers. One of the mothers was my mammy's friend, and they were often chatting together. One of the soldier knew that the victims were dead he ordered the mothers to take them back to the car and then we were all gathered in front of the car.

* **What was the first view you had seen?**

- At what time?

* **I mean when you left the car.**

- From the moment of opening the door I felt the difference. I enjoyed the fresh air but once I had a look from the driver's window I saw a gloomy sky and a dusty air. I had taken a deep breath and went down of the car. The situation was horrible; I looked around I saw nothing but a barren desert, even the soil was not similar to ours in Kurdistan. The fear grew more; why on earth they brought us to this empty desert? Why they did not bring us back to our home? I had fear that just by leaving us in this desert we will die because of lack of water and food. Besides, we were defenseless and might be attacked by wild dogs and wolves.

One question remained in my mind and that was why this government punishing us in that way? What was the guilt of those women, children and babies? I could not find any answer but the conclusion that I reached to, was they brought to this empty desert to kill us.

* **Was your car the only one to stop?**

- No, all of them.

* **Where there any building around?**

- No, nothing was there.

* **What was the time more or less?**

air, water and food. If such situation is created because of a natural disaster, it will be understandable but when the heads of regime want to kill their own people in that cruel way, it is really beyond man's understanding.

It was a sunny day; the place was getting hotter and hotter every minute. We were desperate for drinking water. Dehydration, starvation and extreme heat were turning our life to hell. I wished to have some fresh air before being shot dead. It was a very long way to drive. They gave us no rest whatsoever. The cars stopped somewhere, they did not open our door but we noticed through a little hall that driver and the guard went to a military post and came back after a while and the car moved again.

* **Do you think that the drivers and guards were changed or the same soldiers continued the journey with you?**

- I cannot tell that they were changed or not. All I know they were all looking the same. I don't the reason why they left the car but once they were in again they drove for few minutes and changed the direction, and took an unpaved road. I did my prayer and asked my God to make them taking us to the village where we came from but when I looked at the passengers I found them from different villages and I was once more disappointed.

The journey continued for another half hour and the cars stopped. We started looking at each other as if we were reading each other's faces and to guess what would happen to us! After a short while the doors of the car were wide opened and we were asked to leave the car. We felt the fresh air coming in; I preferred to die outside than being kept in that filthy box.

Although we were ordered to get off but nobody dared to do so. Then a soldier came in and pulled some passengers out, and then we all followed them. The two dead children were carried

- I don't know because after they ordered us back to the car they stopped it again and became dark inside so I could not see anybody, and I did not tell anybody that it was easy to open. I should have told them and even helped them to do so. However, we remained only for ten minutes with folded eyes and the car stopped once more, and once more the doors were opened and we had to get off. I was not clever enough to remove the eye pieces of my mother and my little sister.

This time they were not reluctant. I think they knew what they were going to do and we too, felt that our end will be in that desert.

* **Why did you feel that your end was in their hands?**

- Well, when we got off we noticed that there were pits near the places where the cars parked, and the victims were brought close to their brinks. And thus we realized that the pits were our graves. I also noticed that we were inactive; to my calculation we were given some drugs instead of drinking water to avoid our resistance, or our sleepiness might have been caused by dehydration and starvation. Over and above we were all shocked by the fate that we were going to face. One question remains in my mind; why nobody showed resistance or tried to escape and no women cried for the fate of her children?

* **Was it dark when you got off the car for the second time?**

- It was early in the evening and I could see clearly.

* **Could you see anybody who had removed the piece of cloth on his/ her eyes?**

- To be honest that was not my concern and I did not concentrate on that at all. I think they feared the punishment of the soldiers and they did not dare to open them.

- It was just about sun set.

* **Did they mix all the people together?**

- No, every group was kept beside their car.

* **Were there many soldiers around the area?**

- Not really. There was no military base in that desert, there were only some land cruiser patrolling the convoy. I think they were the same soldiers who came with us from Topzawa. However, we were kept there without being given any explanations; all they did was bringing a container of water and everybody was given some by the lid of the container! I considered that a big favor, because my mouth was totally dry. Once more I thought over and over asking myself about the reason of bringing all those women and children to that desert. Nothing had led me to a conclusion that we will see our homeland again.

Eventually I cut every hope to go back home because if they would put us again in that bus we will all die slowly. At that moment I would have chosen to be killed there and see an end to the suffering we met in the hands of our government's army. All my calculation were nullified when they came back with some drinking water and folded our eyes with pieces of black clothes and took us back to the box. I noticed that the cloth was loose and easy to open? It was difficult to guess what they were planning to do with us. We knew that folding our eyes meant execution by fire squad but what had changed their mind to give us some drinking water, and last but not least why they didn't finish as in that empty desert?

* **Did anybody remove the black cloth?**

- Yes, I did so.

* **Anybody else opened it?**

- The sun had just shied away but it was not very dark.
- * **Were the corpses of the two children left in the car or brought down with you?**
 - Oh thank you for reminding me; just after they through us into the pit a soldier went back to the car, brought the dead babies and threw them to the pits.
- * **Was he carrying both of them together?**
 - No, he was throwing them one by one. He could do it that way because the vehicle was too close to the mass-grave.
- * **How many soldiers were around?**
 - There were two of them guarding the pit. There were also some other who took the action of bringing down the victims and pushing them to the pit.
- * **How was the color of their uniforms?**
 - They were khaki (green with spots).
- * **What type of gun were they carrying?**
 - “kalashinkov ”
- * **Which way did they carry their machine guns?**
 - Firmly with both hands, one on the trigger and the other hand was used to point the gun at as.
- * **Have you heard before the way the “ kalashinkov” AK-47 shot sound?**
 - Yes of course, my father was used to shoot at targets. He also trained me how to use it.
- * **Have you ever attended shooting people?**

- * **When the people were blindfolded, how could the go close to the pits?**
 - Well, there was not a long distance between the cars and the pits. We needn’t walk; we were just thrown to the holes as soon as we were off the car.
- * **How deep were the pits?**
 - Just more the one meter.
- * **How long was it?**
 - I cannot give you a precise answer because I have never seen a bulldozer before and at that time I thought that one bulldozer would make a pit as big as its knife, but certainly it was big enough for a full load of a bus, and therefore it must have been about six meters long.
It is worth mentioning it that my aunty had collapsed and died before being pushed down to be shot dead. I think she was traumatized and passed away because of the horror. To be honest, man may die after such terrible sufferings before being shot. Over and above, we were taken to a place looked like a land of no-man. We had no right of defense or the chance to pronounce our last words. Actually we were dead before settling down in the mass graves. If there is a term in the vocabularies called deadly shocking then that is what we suffered.
- * **Which part of the grave you were thrown too.**
 - I was right beside the wall of the grave.
- * **Who was thrown next to you in that pit?**
 - As always I was next to my mother and sisters, we were all shivering from fear. I was holding my mum’s dress very tightly.
- * **What was the time?**

* **How long was the gap between throwing you down to the grave and opening fire on you?**

- It was just around ten to fifteen minutes.

* **Which group was exposed to shooting first; yours or the other one in the neighboring pits?**

- As I did not heard any other shooting I think that they shot us in the same time.

* **Isn't possible that you were shot first and thus you could not hear the other shooting?**

- No, I don't think so because I would heard the shooting in the near-by graves especially I was conscious for a reasonable while after being shot.

* **Before being shot, have you heard an order from any army commander to start the shooting, or it started all of sudden?**

- Somebody had clearly ordered them but honestly I did not understand what they were saying.

* **Can remember even one word of it?**

- No, all I can tell; is that a voice came from a distance and they started showering us?

* **How long did the process of shooting last?**

- I don't know how long it took all together, but when they finished the first rifle they put a new one, and thus the process was repeated twice.

* **How was your position during the shooting, did you dare to look around and see what was happening or you just lowered your head and conglobated your body to catch less shots?**

- No, all I have seen was a bomb hit a house in Kulajo. A woman was wounded and died later on.

* **Were the two soldiers' faces covered?**

- No, they were only wearing helmets.

* **What was the color of their helmets?**

- Red.

* **How about the color of their boots?**

- They were black.

* **Did you look at the soldiers before the shooting start?**

- Yes I did.

* **May I ask you to describe the shooting?**

- It was a very fearful view. Imagine that there is somebody standing over your head and wants to hit you with a stick or a stone how fearful it will be, but how about watching barbarian soldiers with machine guns? Over and above we were piled in a pit with no chance to escape.

* **Did you have any hope to survive?**

- I really cannot give you the correct answer; on the one hand we did not commit any crime to be punished and on the other hand we were already in the grave. But the only hope was someone who may come for our rescue.

* **Who was that some one?**

- To me, my father was our hero. I was always thinking of him to come and rescue us.

full of tears. He really reminded me with my father's tears when he was forced to leave me in Topzawa notorious camp. The man was carrying two more rifles but he stopped for a while until the other soldier shouted at him, and then he threw me back to the pit. Once more the other one ordered him to shoot at me and he did. For the last moment I saw him, he was still crying. Due to the extra shots, I also collapsed. I felt one bullet penetrated my back. I lost my conscious and did not know what had happened afterwards.

Later on, I regained my conscious but I don't know how long did it take after the last bullet! I realized I could move my hands, I found myself alive. I raised my head a little and could see no body around, and then I removed the sand on my body, had a better look and could see the soldiers were gathering in front of the headlights of their cars. They were getting ready to leave but I collapsed once more, most probably due to the amount of blood that I lost. I came back to life for the second time. I heard the bulldozers were roaring. They were in function; covering the mass graves with sands

I was conscious enough to realize that I was having the last chance to survive, to run away before getting buried in the desert. I heard a voice calling me while I was leaving the grave; it was a little girl about eight years old. "Where do you go" she asked me. I spoke to her very calmly and asked her if she was injured or not! She said that she was alive but her legs were stuck under another corp. I told her that I could pull her out and take her to the safety if she wanted, but her answer was no, because she did not want to leave her mother alone and then I left her and the mass graves.

This is the step that I regret it all my life; I should have worked harder to persuade her to come with me and to help her to stay alive. While I am blaming myself I try to look for the reason why did I behave that way? The only answer that I have is; I was not fully conscious.

- Yes, I can remember everything as if it was happening some minutes ago. I don't want to say that I was courageous, I was rather scared and I looked at everything because I was shocked and could no more control myself, and thus I could see everything lively.

*** When you were looking at your mother and your sister; how did you see the process of shooting?**

- Oh yes I have seen everything.

*** My dear Taimur, I know how painful the shooting process was, but as a witness you will do a great favor to the history of our nation if you tell us the full story.**

- The first bullet hit my mother's head, her white head-cover flew in the sky, and then blood gushed out over her face. The next one hit the chick of sister Lawlaw, she fell motionlessly. My other sister Snur raised her hand palm as if she wanted to protect herself from the bullets but she was shot from her little hand and, as a result blood burst out and she collapsed. I could not see what had happened to my third sister Gelas but I think she was beside my mother corps and fell under her.

My turn came soon I was hit from my shoulder. Within seconds we were all showered and piled over each other. The lady who was often chatting with my mother, was in a position as if she was prostrating herself in prayer, the bullets were hitting one side of her thigh, coming out from the other side with big pieces of flesh. The woman was in a great pain, she was begging my mother to help her!

The bullets were faster than the rain's drops, within less than a minute the whole group was piled over each other. In an unconscious move I got up and attacked one of the soldiers caught him from his belt and asked him to stop shooting. I hold him very tightly but when he raised his head I saw his eyes were

was falling down and getting up on my feet again. I felt weak but determined to continue making my way until my last drop of blood.

It was a dark night but the sky was clear. The land was not green like that of Kurdistan; I could see nothing but a plant with thorn – I was told later that it was called (Agool) in Arabic-. Sometimes those plants looked like soldiers and I had to change my way to avoid them. I could see a fire somewhere but I did not go near it because I could not exclude that it was made by soldiers. I changed my direction but I saw the lights of cars on the road. It was not easy for me to know which way their direction was but I imagined that they were to near to me as the land was flat and I had to divert my road again.

Actually I was afraid of everything and obliged to change the direction again and again; I was taking left, then right and was finding myself in the old place. The main reason of my fear was my thinking that they might have known about my escaping. They might have found the little girl alive and asked her about other survivals and start searching for me.

I had millions of reasons to be very careful, to stay alive and to tell the story of massacring my family and my people without any wrong doing. Would I stay beside my family's corps then who would describe the way all that crimes were committed?

*** Was there a place to be used as a guide or you had own indication to find your direction to make your way out?**

- No there were no indications whatsoever. It was a dark night; all you could see were some lights glittering somewhere. However, I did not dare to go to the direction of any of those lights because somehow they looked like military barracks with lot of heavy vehicles. They did not look like residential places and I had to avoid them.

However, I made my way alone, a way out of the hell, stepping on flesh, blood and bones. Blood was mixed with sand. I slipped several time because the spelled blood made the place slippery. Eventually I could leave the pit but not the hell! There were bulldozers waiting working; their headlights spotted on land cruisers patrolling the area to see who was alive! Would they find any, the soldiers would have showered him or her with bullets before being cover with sands. Of course a walking person would have been a real target there for I had to hide immediately.

Fortunately there was a hill of sand thrown out from the grave by a bulldozer and I could easily make a hall and hide myself in the loose. The sand was warm and nice, I don't know what had happened to me; I found myself a sleep in the sand! Was it blessing of God to forget the deep bleeding wounds and fall asleep? Was it the felicity of Lord to make me avoiding any movement that could be detected by the enemy? I do not know how long my rest was but when I awaked I found no soldiers around but the bulldozers were working in the nearby pits. They were putting the soil back to cover the graves, and thus I could escape the big blades of the heavy machines that might have pushed me back to the grave or cut me to pieces.

*** How many bulldozers could you see that night?**

- I could see only one off them.

*** Was your plan just get far away from the terrible mass graves?**

- Yes, in the beginning I wanted to leave the hell of fire-squad and I tried to move in away to avoid being seen by the murderer or being spotted by the machines' head light. Safety came first but I did not have any where to go or where the safe place was! On the other hand I was no sure that I could make the way no matter how short it would be because of the bleeding. Actually I

anything about us; he could not help himself either. One more question struck my mind was whether my father is alive or he too, is killed by Saddam Hussein gang? Somehow I could recall some appeals of the helpless victims that sounded like my father's voice!

With that tranquility provided by late night and the desert atmosphere I could walk and walk looking at the sky. But all of sudden I saw a dark image disturbed the view of the sky. I did not know what was it but was not a part of the sky that I watched all the way long and it was not that far either. By getting closer to it, I realized that the thing was erected on the ground. I went on getting closer to it but soon heard dogs' barking.

The barks made me rather glad, because as I was brought up in a village I knew that the presence of dogs means that there is life around! I stepped toward the dogs and they too were getting closer to me. Two possibilities made me watchful; firstly the dogs might guard a military barracks and secondly my bleeding wounds may temptate the dogs to attack me. Somehow I behaved in the right way by sitting in a squatting manner because the dogs remain barking not attacking in such cases. There were four big angry dogs surrounding me and it was not possible to move anymore and here I thought of shouting to make myself heard by the people living around.

In the mean time I threw stones around to make the dogs busy running around to bite them. Fortunately and before waiting long I noticed that somebody was approaching making his way toward me with a portable light in his hand. I felt very relaxed by meeting people in the middle of the desert and in midnight. I thought that my God had responded to my prayers and sent somebody to help me. I prayed even more to meet a kind person who might understand my tragedy and not someone who might hand me over to the Iraqi army.

What was important is; I made my way out of the hell of the mass-graves, no matter which place would be my next destination. After having few steps my feet were stumbled; that scared me a lot as I thought that I was walking through another pit of thrown bodies, but luckily it was only drifts made by military transporters. My greatest concern at that particular moment was to avoid the killer troops and mass graves.

However, I sat down by the car drifts and had a close look at them to see whether they were old or new. If they were new then I would have followed them until reaching the place where people might be found. By testing the traces of the tyres with my finger tips, I realized that they were not old and worth to trace them. In the mean time I decided to donate five Iraqi Dinars (from the fifteen Dinars that my father had given them to me in Topzawa concentrating camp saying that we might need them for shopping should we go a city centre). With this donation I begged my God to help to get that terrible situation, and thus I followed that road but unfortunately it was not a good guide as it was often covered by the sand brought by the desert's wind. This had happened several times and I had to work hard to find it again and again. Thus I followed that road as far as I could but when I disappeared completely I did not give up, continued going and going as if I was following my mysterious destiny.

The place was peaceful and quiet; it was the right time to think of my father, to think of my mother and little sisters, to think about my kind uncles. I was often thinking of the manner how to tell my father the story of butchering my mother, Gelas, Lawlaw and Snur if I could ever survive and meet my father. I was thinking of what my father would tell me as I runaway alone? The only justification I thought about was the fact that he himself had seen in Topzawa where we could not say a word about our fate or ask a simplest question about our future or even asking for a glass of water. Well, our father could not do

acquainted with some Kurds. However, the man pushed the dogs away, gave me a hand and took me to his black tent which was made of animals' hair. There were an elderly lady and a young girl who were also awake. They were all shocked to find a little boy in Kurdish dresses especially in mid-night and in mid of the grand desert with dresses stained with fresh blood! They worried about me. They gave me a good care, they started giving me bread and yogurt; for reasons I still don't know I asked for some onions! Nevertheless, I did not get any onions because they could not understand me.

Days after my arrival I got acquainted with the family especially the house owner for the man had learnt some Kurdish during his military services with Kurdish soldiers. The man told me that his name was "Ganim". He brought me new dresses; he took the old ones away and burnt them. They cleaned my wounds and removed the blood with a piece of clean cloth.

They were kind enough to give new dresses that fit my size. That was amazing because there was only one man in that house whose size was bigger than mine. I put the dress (which was called "Dishdash" on) and soon fell asleep.

I woke up in the morning to see that they were breeding sheep. I saw another man with a boy of my age around the place. I realized that the Dishdash was belonged to the young boy. The boy was called Khalid; he was the son of the other man "Abed". They were both looking after the cattle. I had not seen them at night; probably they were sleeping somewhere else.

That day in the morning I found a car, type pick-up was waiting for me. The elderly women and the children were sitting on the back. I was asked to seat next to them. The engine started and the car moved; I looked around, it was just a long way in the desert and I could see nothing but sand. What was strange to me; there was no paved road similar to the used by the killers

I had really lived in very critical moment until the man came closer. First of all he shouted at the dogs to stop barking and to make a space for him to get closer to me. The first impression was good because he was a civilian not a soldier but the question remained in my mind was how reliable was he? Is he a man of God or an agent of the regime? Will he hospitalize me or hand me over to the nearest army unit? However he was an Arab in Bedwin dresses and that gave rise to the question of how to communicate with each other? Neither I could speak Arabic nor could he speak Kurdish. How should I express myself and make him understand what had happened to me? Why I'm near his house in the mid of the desert? Is he expected to be a very kind man to help a little boy without knowing anything about him?

Deep in my heart I begged my God to help me and to bless me by softening the heart of this Arabic man and to deal with me in a human way, in a way differs from that of the Arabic soldiers did in Topzawa concentration camp; to get some water to drink, something to eat and a place to have some rest and to understand my problem. □

The man had spoken in a nice tone and that was a big relaxation to me. I felt relaxed and happy, so happy that I could not express myself. All I could do was uttering some words without having any concentration on what I was trying to say. Only after a long time the Arab man told that I had asked him to take me to the hospital of Kalar. I have met the same man in 2009, he told me that desert that I walked through was a no-man land and it was difficult even for wolves to pass through and it was a miracle for a young boy like me to make his way through.

*** How did the man know that you were asking about Kalar Hospital in Kurdish? □**

- Well I think that the man had served the Iraqi army in the Kurdish area near Mosul North of Baghdad and became

hosts told me the story of that journey twenty one years later- in 2009- that once we were controlled by military troops to ask the reason why we were driving fast, and the driver answered that he was taking a patient to hospital.

* **Were you personally meant by the sick person?**

- No, they meant the old woman who was covering me and herself with her frock, because they did not want me to be seen by anybody.

* **What was the last destination of that journey any way?**

- I was taken to a city. And as they narrated the story some twenty one years later, I started shouting at them when I arrived in that city saying; drop me here, this Kalar! We passed by that city to reach a little village of about eight houses. The people there were dressed differently. They had a red cover on their heads fixed with something like a black rope! (Oh my God is that the Arabic dress, but my host and the driver do not have the red head cover?) I asked myself.

However, we entered a very friendly house. I was put on a bed, surrounded with some children. The adults were busy coming and going. I realized that the house was theirs but there were other families living with them. I was asking myself again and again; God where am I? Apparently they started cleaning and nursing my wounds. I had a severe pain but I did not show it. I was rather making a happy face to express that I feel at home, and that they were a very kind people and they would not hand me over to the government. Indeed I was personally sure that I was between safe hands.

* **Did you ask what the name of the village was?**

- No, I did not because we could not communicate with each other. But I knew that the house wife's name was Aisha.

the night before. The car made a long way before reaching the destination.

The lack of Arabic language had deprived me to ask interesting questions such as the reason why they avoided the main roads and took side roots. My speculation was; they too, were avoiding the oppressive troops of the Iraqi government. After a long drive, we meet a military convoy. I was terrified and thought the whole Iraqi army is searching to find me! The elderly lady shared my feeling because whenever we came across a military car she would cover me with her veil to avoid being seen by the troops.

Eventually, I trusted them that they would take me to a safe place and would not hand me over to the authorities. I remember that we were stopped twice by military police check points and after a short conversation in Arabic we were allowed to go. And in a single case they opened the rear door, had a look but they did not us for our identities.

* **Were you checked by military police?**

- Well, they were in military uniform.

* **Were you scared to see them?**

- Of course. I had a feeling that all the military convoys we had seen on the road were looking for me, and when they stopped us I thought that they knew I was there and they would arrest me again. The Arabian companions; the driver, the elderly women and the children were also scared that is why the woman had covered me with a part of her veil whenever we passed by military people. Once a soldier came to check the rear part of the car but the woman told him that she was escorting a patient.

Due to lack of communication, I was not told where I was taken but because they were protecting me from the soldiers I thought that they would hide me in a better place. My

me? My mind was engaged with many questions but unfortunately I could not express myself. They were all looking disturbed. I was restless and disturbed, too and felt much worried because I did know what was going to happen.

Eventually I was concerned. They brought a tractor, put on the rear trailer and moved outside of the city. Apparently I was taken to another village and I was put up in a house of an elderly man who also a big family. This village was somehow different from the others because the houses were modern. This family was also a big one. They were very friendly with me. Everybody was looking after me; I think they were asked to help me until I get on my feet.

Only later on I had got to know the reason of that movement. All the three places were belonging to one family, to Ganims. And what had happened was; a brother of them died by a car accident, and a big funeral was planned, so to avoid being questioned about a strange person like me I was moved to the third place. I liked the idea because I stayed within a family circle and between safe hands.

*** Did you ever ask what the name of the village was?**

- No, to be honest I never asked for the name because I was only there on temporary bases and never been there again. However, this does not mean that I do not appreciate their efforts to heal my wounds. I assure you that I will look for them and show love and respect to them whenever I can do that.

*** For how long did you stay or you were kept in that place?**

- I stayed about two weeks with them. One evening the family was visited by two men with a private car. After a short rest they asked me to go for a drive with them. We entered a near-by city. They parked in the central city. One of them looked at me intensively as if he wanted to buy me new clothes. He left the

*** Did the Bedouin man and woman who brought you to the village stayed with you?**

- They were there till the afternoon of that day, and they left to leave me alone. I really missed them. They were very kind people who made me feel at home. Deep from my heart I liked them and wished to see them again.

My new host was a crowded family, the kids about my age and they were always around. I was never left alone. I spent there about ten days in that village. The first days made me feel very sad because when they were gathering for lunch, they were reminding with my family, my parents and little sisters. My eyes were dripping tears. I was crying in front of them and couldn't have food with them.

I guessed that they returned my tears to the pains caused by the bullets there for they were preparing hot packs to put them on my wounds. The problem was the more they served me, the more pain I felt because through them, I was always remembering my family in Kulajo. The life style of the new village was much the same of my original one.

Besides, the view of massacring my people was very fresh in my mind. The exterminations of the little children was unforgettable especially my little sisters. However, it is true that the time is healing; I started getting acquainted with their children and we could build bridges of understanding.

One day in the evening, I felt the whole inhabitants including my new family disturbed and upset. They were coming and going and looking restless. I was asking myself if the regime was threatening them to destruct their village like they did with Kulajo and others. Would the troops and mercenaries attack them? Does the regime hate all the Iraqi people alike?

On the other hand I was afraid of having been troubling them because they found a shelter with a medical treatment for

military man wasted no time, he threw his uniform and put his Arabic folk dress on and sat down next to me.

Moreover, the man served me by preparing a glass of fruit juice and served it with some cookies. He behaved like a gentleman and introduced himself; his name was (Jahil Ashem). He was a close relative of the family and married to one of their daughters.

Thus I spend the first night in a place controlled by the Government. I was given a bedroom with another boy of my age, but before going to bed I faced a big difficulty to find a water closet. I could only communicate by using signals. I spent long days without verbal communications. On the one hand the lack of communication was inconvenient to all of us, and on the other hand I could not speak about the amount of pains I suffered from my wounds. They did not take me to any hospital because they feared being discovered by the intelligence departments. They were only cleaning my wounds with unsterilized pieces of cloth. My wounds were contaminated and they could not remove the puss and dirt from wounds, and thus my wounds were getting worth.

Thanks God the people in the city were more cautious and heedful, they brought a male nurse in the morning. A man came in with injections, bandages and other medical necessities. The idea of having an injection was as fearful as a bullet! This due to the way the children were brought up in the villages; they were threatened by doctors and injections for any wrong doing. Over and above the teachers for their parts were practicing the same mistake by menacing the naughty pupils with doctors!

However, the men were stronger than me they hold me tight and the nurse treated my wounds very carefully. Probably it was because of blood and puss scene that I got nausea and brought back whatever I had eaten in that morning. Here I would like to narrate one of the strangest rituals of Arabs that I have ever seen was: "A young girl filled her palms with the

car, entered a shop and came back with a wrist watch. He asked me to wear the new watch and I did, leaving the old one in their car. I could read their faces and guess that they were very sympathetic people and I felt very content to accompany them.

*** Do you know which city were you in? Could you see any name or any indicating notice board in the streets?**

- As you know I was not in the school long enough to learn Arabic and the people I acquainted with did not speak Kurdish either, and thus, I could not ask such important questions. However, few months later I learnt that we were in Samawa city.

After the shopping they stopped their car in front of a house and we all went off and entered the house. I found a big family living there; they were all very friendly I guessed that from the way they were looking at me and dealing with me. I understood that they were always talking about me and I felt a pity that I could not tell them who I was and was the story of my life. Day by day I became more relaxed and more assured that I can live away from the tyrants. Although the intelligence service was very active in the cities but I always felt that those people were very careful and very attentive. The watch they bought for me was not just a gift but a symbol for tranquility.

Nevertheless, a surprising shock turned my tranquility upside down; shortly after our arrival in that house the door of the house was knocked and a military man entered the house. I was scared to death because he was in the same uniform as those who massacred my people few weeks ago. I could not bear the shock. I just rushed to hide myself under a table. The family's response was even more dramatic; they started crying because somehow they understood that something terrible was executed by the army to make me that much traumatized. The

type that dug our graves. The gift shook me and made me lose my temper again. I smashed the tool in a very tough way. I wouldn't blame the family to take me as a crazy child. Nevertheless, they knew that behind every shock was a strong reason but they could not guess what had happened exactly.

Once Manshad visited the family and presented his fiancée a book, the girl came and showed it to me; it was an Arabic-Kurdish dictionary and the girl started teaching me Arabic language. My new language and my wounds were improving.

Few days later they brought a Kurdish man in Arabic dresses. They wanted to know what had happened to me. The man told me what they were after and if I was still suffering from pains. To meet and talk with a Kurdish in a city in middle of the desert was one of the happiest moments of my life. Honestly when they gathered and took us to Topzawa then to the killing field, I thought that the whole Kurdish nation was exterminated and that man was the only survivor. I looked at the man as if he was an angel from the sky. He was kind and friendly but because of some strange reaction of mine, I could not say a word or answer any of his questions.

*** Why you did not talk to him? Don't you think that you had missed a chance to go back to Kurdistan with him?**

- Frankly speaking I don't know either. Was I under the impact of the surprise or was I shocked? The man considered me deaf and dumb, and then he left without blaming me at all but the family was disappointed and could not get any useful information about me. I started questioning myself was I right or wrong? Wrong because the Kurdish man might have taken me to his house and then arranged my return to Kalar, right because would they knew the terrible story of Anfal they might

exerts of what I threw out, run to the yard of the house, prayed loudly and threw the thing upwards to the sky!" When I was able to ask for an explanation I was told that, it was a tradition to ask from the Mighty Allah to take revenge of innocent people from the tyrant Saddam Hussein.

My wounds were in a bad condition because they were ignored for a long time, and therefore the man worked hard to cure them. He opened them deeply, cleaned them carefully and added a white powder to them, and dressed them carefully. This process took several days. The man was coming regularly. I was told that his name was "Manshad" engaged to one of their daughter, and thus Manshad could show his fiancée how efficient he was. But unfortunately this love-story ended in a tragic way! The man was accused to be an active anti regime politician who finished some high ranked military officer in a hospital, and was executed in 1989 by the tyrant's police.

Day by day my wounds were getting better and also I was getting more adapted by the family. I felt that they treat me like their son. Once the medical care was over a special room was no more needed. In an evening I was asked to sit down and watch Television. There was a military program on; the camera was on Saddam Hussein and his killing troops. I was shocked again! Here, the family realized that I was a victim of his genocidal crimes and that is why I was thrown in the desert. They also understood the way I had behaved when their son-in-law entered the house in the first evening.

One day they brought me school books and I started looking at one of them. Saddam's picture was one the first page. I brought a pen and started disfiguring the photo. They understood how much I hated him. They never blamed me or asked for the reason. Surprisingly most of the things they showed or brought to me were reminding me with the sad story of my troubled life; as an example one day they gave a little gift in a box and I opened it to find a bulldozer rapped in, the same

with my other brothers and sisters. I receive the same treatment as the others; I was getting the same amount of money for daily expenses. Thanks God I found my second family in the middle of the desert!

*** When could you tell your story to your second family?**

- As I mentioned earlier one of the girls called (Karima) had brought a Kurdish-Arabic Dictionary and started teaching me. She was selecting the useful Arabic words and we were looking for their meanings in Kurdish. And in the meantime the whole family was trying to talk to me and to find the means of some understanding with me. Eventually we could understand each other easily and I could tell them my story. But the very early days of meeting those families I was called Ali not Taimur. So my full name became (Ali Abd Aisham) a Shiite Believer and doing my prayers in the same way they did.

*** Were you a practicing Muslim before the Anfal operations?**

- No, I was not.

*** How about your parents?**

- My parents were very good Muslims. I remember that we were detained in Holy Ramadan, my parents and many other people fasted as long as they could, or as long as they could get food and drink.

*** How was the treatment of your hosts in Samawa after they knew what your story was?**

- Their treatment became even better than before. They looked after me more intensively; they started taking me for shopping with them but I need talk or ask for anything in public. I was not allowed to play outside or going out until my language

have been dismissed from their hospitality for fear that they may face the same fate from the regime as a punishment.

However, I stayed that way without letting them know my real story but this had never lessened their love to me. Besides I was a very clean, amiable and faithful child. Over all I was a very well looking and socially acceptable person and when, later on, I told them about my agony they loved me even more. The family respected me very much and they were caring very much about me. Imagine when I recovered and started playing with other children, they never allowed me to go out to the streets; they always kept me behind closed door. They did not want me to be seen by neighbors or certain guests. I was kept in an isolated room especially when unwanted visitors coming to the house. Interestingly the children were doing the same when adults were not around.

I spent more than three months before being allowed to see the outside world! And that is only after I started speaking Arabic, and even then I was advised not to talk to anybody but to behave like a “deaf and dumb” person. They did want anybody to realize that I was not their real son. They did not want me to speak to other children because they knew that any lapsus linguae would be very dangerous.

*** Well after being living in that house for a long time, you should have known whose house was it?**

- Yes for sure, the owner was called “Falih Saffah”, god bless him he is no more alive. His son Hussein is heading the family at present. Their family is well known all over Samawa city. Hussein’s mother or “Um Hussein” was a real lady, I really considered him as my own mother. She loved me very much. She told all her children that I was their real brother! Her daughter had always treated me like their other brothers and honestly I felt the same. Um Hussein’s real name was (Zuaina). She was awakening me with her kisses exactly the way she did

they were all brothers from one father, and thus I belonged to a big family and was accepted by all of them as their son. Nevertheless my happy days with those families had never led me to forget my people and my homeland. I always dreamed to go back to the place I belong, to Kurdistan especially I learnt through the family that there were still people living in Kurdistan and there was communications with them. It was very important to me to know that there were still people who remained alive there because the crowd of victims in Topzawa Concentration Camp was so big that gave me an impression that the whole Kurdish nation was exterminated!

Therefore, the idea of going back to Kurdistan came only after I became sure that the Kurdish nation was still safe and sound in spite that big number massacred innocent people. It was only in Samawa when I knew that there was a war between Iraq and Iran and that it lasted for eight years, and only there I had got to know that Halabja was bombarded with forbidden chemical weapons that killed five thousand people.

The people in Samawa also told me that Iraq had occupied Kuwait, and that there might be another war launched on Iraq by the United States of America. The image of a new war frightened me very much because I thought the country will be ruined and there will be no place in the country to live peacefully in. I had also fear to be caught by Iraqi authorities on the way back home or to be detained again with other Kurds to face the Saddam's killing machine.

The family had two young sons (Fazil and Salih) they were both serving the army. Salih was a soldier in Kurdistan. Whenever I heard his name and his place of services I remembered my family and my homeland and became more eager to go back home and to tell everyone what I had experienced and what had happened to my family and all the other children and women. I had also a glimpse of hope that my father might be alive, and might be waiting for us or waiting for

developed to their standard. I could even speak their local dialect. These all came on the expense of my native language for I could not find anybody to speak Kurdish with. These were important to my every-day life simply because the family trusted my language ability, and nobody would imagine that I was a Kurdish child. Eventually I could sit and talk with guests and introduce myself as Ali Abd.

The most interesting change to me was I could visit my new relatives including those in the village of Alaisham; we were visiting that village very often.

*** I should have asked earlier but what happened to the money and the playing games that your father had given them to you?**

- Oh yes, when arrived the tent and accommodated in the there, they burned my Kurdish dresses, dressed me in Arabic Dishdash and put the money in my pocket but I don't what had happened to the games. I think they threw them away as they were not important.

*** How long could you keep the money with you?**

- I kept them with me until one day we went to the village, and I bought cookies and sweets worth five dinars for the children there. That was the amount of the money that I promised my God to donate to the poor people if I could leave that grave safely. Five Iraqi dinars of those days was a good amount of money.

*** You remained relatively a long time in Samawa, when did you miss your homeland or planed to go back?**

- The point is that the Arabic families tried their best to make me feel at home and to make happy. By Arabic families I mean the families that I stayed with them for different periods of time,

ask them such sensitive questions. When Salih came back to Samawa he asked about the name of my family, relatives and our village and the town it belonged to.

Salih had a good Kurdish friend who was a soldier with him in the army. He promised me to ask him to collect whatever information possible about my family. What a strange life! I was brought by Arab soldiers to the heart of the desert to be shot dead, and now I expect an Arabic soldier to helping me going back to the place they brought from. Salih was a bit reluctant to speak to the Kurdish soldier and telling him the terrifying story of Anfal and the place where I live. Therefore it took some time before telling the soldier my real story.

*** Did you know who the Kurdish soldier was?**

- Not personally but his name was Asa'ad Hajji Hussein, he was from Sharazoor. His village was leveled with the ground and accommodated in (Anassr) compulsory camp. Asa'ad had sent his father to Sarkalat to find my aunty. He found her but she was frightened and gave no information but send him to Kalar to talk to my uncle there and he did. Everybody in Sarkalat, Kalar and Smud were in doubt to trust Hajji Hussein and his story, they could imagine that a little boy could escape the killing field and run away to Samawa! Afterward the Kurdish soldier brought the news to Salih who came back to Samawa and we all got the message that the other part of my father's family alive. I was very delighted and could not believe myself that after killing my father, my two uncles, and then my mother with my little sisters and my aunty with ten children and after shooting hundreds of people in few minutes and leading tens of thousands detainees to the pits of mass graves, that there were people still alive and living around Kalar!

Salih came back to tell me and my second family that some members of my parents are alive and they are willing to readapt Taimur as their own son. My Arabic family wanted to

some news about us. Should I go home I would find my uncles and many other relatives in Kalar, Smud camp and Sarkalat and I could live with them. What I did not calculate for was the hail of questions that would be put up for me such as how did I survive, where did I live all this time and how could I come back home? The only thing that I thought about was going back to the place I belong.

I started telling them that I was willing to back to Kurdistan. Their response in the very beginning was very cautious; they were telling me that I was caught by the government I, my Kurdish relatives and the Arab families will face the severest punishment. I was asked to wait until the situation would change to better but I was getting very impatient.

Once they promised to ask Salih to help by looking for my family and tell me about their news. Salih was spending three weeks in the army and one week in Samawa with his family. I liked the idea and waited for his return very eagerly.

*** In which part of Kurdistan did Salih served the army?**

- In Zakho.

*** Zakho is right it North of Kurdistan and far away from Kalar; did you think that he could go all the way to Kalar?**

- I did not know where Zakho was and how far was it from my home town but what was important to me was he could meet some Kurds and ask about my relatives.

*** Did Salih have any information about your people?**

- No he did not. That is why he wanted to come back to Samawa and get enough information from me, and then when he goes back to Kurdistan he would find some reliable people to

is in Kalar. I tried hard to get an answer about my father and his brother Omer but in vain. They were always trying to change the subject, and thus I understood that they knew nothing about him.

I remained questioning myself; how did my grandmother survive and went back to Kalar after she was packed into the hell of Topzawa? The only answer that I found was they meant the mother of my mother but not of my father. The survival of any family member was good news for me because I liked to live with a big family, a family full of love, and in the meantime any loss was equally painful. The meeting with my uncles changed my life; they reminded with the image of my parents and sisters, and to the happy days of my childhood. Those memories would not pass without teardrops.

My Arabian family was trying to calm me down; they were saying that I should be happy as my uncles are alive and they would take me back to Kalar.

I did not know who Hajji Hussein was. I looked at him very carefully to find out if he was a close relative of mine, but as there was no way of communication, the question remained without answer. Only later on Salih knew what I was after and told me that he was the father of his friend who helped to find the rest of my family. He also introduced Hajji Hussein to all the hosts and he met a nice reception from everybody.

A big lunch was prepared for our guests. We knew that my uncles would try to take me back home after the lunch and that became the last topic in Alaisham. My Arabic family agreed on my departure but with their condition and that was by spending one month in Kalar and the other month in Samawa. Their condition was accepted. We took a car and I had a look at our host and found them all tears. They raised their hand to sky praying for my safety.

* **Did your uncles have their private car?**

deal calmly with the issue. The desert Bedouin are known to be very patient people. First of all they wanted to be sure about my uncles and they wanted them to come to Samawa or Alaisham to be recognized by me and when things were all right then special arrangements to be followed to take back to Kalar. The father's plan was to arrange the historic meeting in the village where my uncles would attend, and I would be mixed with a big group of boys of my age and they have to find who is who! And as for my part; I shouldn't make any hint that I was the right one.

The gathering took place in a house in Alaisham I was playing with the boys. My uncles arrived in a car. As soon as they got off the car I recognized my uncle Ali and my uncle Aziz

* **Were they alone in the car?**

- They were with Hajji Hussein and Salih?

* **Did everything thing go as it was planned?**

- No I was the first one to break the protocol! When I saw my uncles I forgot everything and run towards them. They did the same and we hugged each other tightly, we could not stop crying. The meeting was very impressive. What was impossible became realistic, and a part of the dream came true. My Arab friends were impressed, too. I saw their full with tears. They had the same feeling of impression, even the children cried with us.

My uncles and Hajji Hussein showered me with questions. They wanted to know everything immediately but I couldn't help them much because I was speaking a different language! My mother tongue was not practiced for a long time and almost forgotten. My uncles understood Arabic a little but they were not able to use it. I questioned them about my father and my grandmother but they were only telling me that granny

*** Two years earlier you were brought from Kurdistan to the desert at gun point for a fire-squad, now you are going back home freely. Can you tell the difference?**

- Free! I never felt free. I was afraid to be detained on the way to Kalar. Moreover, my life was always threatened by the regime's men because whenever they would learn about my survival and my new living place, they would have tried to finish me! Simply because they wouldn't leave any witness of Anfal Genocide alive. And they would also put the families who helped me and accommodated me in troubles. That was the reason I felt safer in the small village of Alaisham than in Kurdistan. Alaisham was safe because it was inhabited by one tribe, and there were no body working as police informer. The main problem was that I missed my people and homeland very much, and the desert had always reminded me with the mass killing and mass graves. Actually it was important for me to live in a place that might reduce my pains but my loyalty to Alaisham family had also impacted my life. So, I was neither free nor could have a piece of mind.

*** When did you arrive in Kalar?**

- It was late at night, too late because we found no transporter to take us to Smud camp. This camp was our destination not the city of Kalar, and thus we took a walk from Kalar to the place where my uncles were forced to live. It is important to mention that I saw the same road from where I and my family were taken at gun points to Koratoo Fort, and now I am returning alone without them. I also remembered the mercenary boss who promised us to take us to Smud and leave us to live in peace.

*** Where did you spend your first night in Smud camp?**

- We spent the first night with my uncle (Rauf)

- No they rented a taxi.

*** Could they trust the taxi driver?**

- I don't know from where they came by a taxi but the one that dropped them in Alaisham did not wait for them and knew nothing about my story.

*** Which mean of transport did you take to Kalar?**

- Firstly we used the family car from the village to Samawa city and we took a bus from there to Baghdad and then another one to Kalar.

*** Were you carrying any identity?**

- No I did not have any.

*** How about the check points?**

- At that time I was only fourteen years old and I was considered under aged for military recruiting, but the strange was I was in Arabic Dishdash with three men in Kurdish folk-dress and we could not understand each other and that moved the curiosity of people! My uncles were also afraid of being asked where from they had got an Arab child. They were mixing some Kurdish words with Arabic and when I regained my Kurdish language, later on I found the words we had used very laughable. Thanks God we could reach home without any difficulties.

*** At What time did you leave Al-Aisham?**

- I don't know about the exact time but we left the village after lunch, we only stayed in Samawa to change the mean of transport, we reached Baghdad at night and continued our journey to Kalar on the same night.

from jails. They were always waiting for Saddam Hussein's amnesty decree to release some innocent people including our family. They told me that they were asking any passengers passed by them if they knew anything about us.

All of sudden the mother of my father also appeared. She was the one who was isolated in Topzawa Concentrated Camp and somehow she was released because of her age. Her presence meant another set of wailing and crying. My people were accustomed to cry for the last two years, their teardrops were always ready. Nevertheless they were very sympathetic and very kind to me, I felt that that all the victims of our family are collected in one person, in me personally. The time passed and I learnt the language again and I could tell them the story of the whole family.

* **Were you able to tell them the story of the shooting?**

- Yes I told them when I regained my mother tongue. I told the story of the death journey, the teams of mass killing, the bulldozers in action and the way I managed to run to the safety. These sad stories mad them more disappointed because I had to tell them all the truth, no matter how tragic the stories were. When I was in Samawa my main dreams were about returning home and to resume the happy life in my homeland. I could come back home, I could find the other part of my family but never knew the taste of happiness. Our life was full of misery. Actually there is no happy life without freedom, without a piece of mind and without putting an end to the oppressive rulers.

I became a symbol of tragedy. Whenever I meet some relatives the wailing would have started; I felt that my return caused more disappointment, I wouldn't blame them because they lost so many dear persons and suffered such long times without knowing anything about them or at least giving them the corpses back to them; made their life very miserable.

* **Did he know that you were on the way to Smud?**

- I don't think so, because when my other uncles had left Kalar they were not sure about my whereabouts and they were not sure if I was the right person or not. Over and above they could not imagine such a quick return!

* **Were they asleep when you arrived?**

- No, I don't think so. As my uncle opened the door and we entered the house, we found everybody including the children was awake.

* **How was the response?**

- It was a big surprise. Once more the crying started, and once more the questions remained without answers due to lack of my Kurdish understanding; I could only give some answers in Arabic.

I have a cousin of my age, his name is (Soran), and I could wear his Kurdish dresses and take of the Dishdash. Eventually I was in my traditional dress and remembering the days I spent in my Kurdish dress with my father and my friends in Kulajo. I was eager to know anything about my father and my other two uncles, and other close relatives. But I found myself unable to communicate. I was sure that they, too, had many questions but it was only a matter of time to regain my language ability.

However, we spent a very emotional night and in the morning they sent after my grandmother (Hallaw). I don't know whether or not she was told about my return but as soon as she saw me she put my head on her breast and started crying. I started crying, too because she smelled like my mother. They all had many things to tell me. I understood from them that they were always waiting for our return and when somebody for whatever reason knocked our doors we thought that were back

cousin called (Sirwan). We spend our days outside of the town. The whole thing came as a great disappointment to me as my survival meant life threat to the remaining part of the family. The problem became more intense when a mercenary boss heard about the release of a young boy from Anfal Genocidal Operations. He ordered his men to find the person and catch a reward from his bosses in Baghdad.

The situation became more serious. My uncle Rauf found the solution; he went to talk to the chieftain of Al-Jaf Grand Tribes (Sarhad Younis) who was a very powerful man and could have a word in such cases. Sarhad could send a secret message to the mercenary boss to stop the investigation and leave our family in peace. He was obeyed. Sarhad advised my uncle to change the story by telling people that Taimur could jump from the military car and work in a restaurant in Baghdad.

After all I could stay peacefully in my uncle's house; things were getting better. The best surprise was a visit paid to us by my brother Fazil from Samawa. He told us that his military unit is transferred to Kalar and by asking for the addresses of my uncles he could find me. The most interesting part of the visit was some hand-made gifts from my Arabic sisters of Alaisham family. He told me that they are all missing me and looking forwards to see me once more. I liked the idea and asked my uncles to allow me to pay a visit to Samawa with Fazil and they agreed. I put on my Arabic Dishdash and made my favored journey to my second family.

*** Did you only visit Samawa and the families in the city or you also went to Alaisham village and met the rest of the family?**

- No I visited them all. I went to the village and found all of them except for Ganim the man who saved my life by putting me up in his Bedouin tent. I looked for him but they told me that he was near Saudi Arabia because he was a deserted

For my disappointment I was asked by my uncles to stay at home all the time and not to talk to anybody, as if I was in Samawa again. I thought those restrictions were due the fact that I don't speak Kurdish and I may face questions about my real identity. But later on I realized that the reason was that half of Smud people were subject to mass killing. Many of them were taken away with giving any information to their families, and thus the families were looking for their lost ones and should they knew that I was back from the mass grave the whole inhabitation of Smud people would pour into my uncle's house to get some information from me. Then sooner or later the government would have detained me for the second time.

*** Were there many people within your family knew about your survival?**

- In the beginning my two uncles and their families, and my two grannies were aware about my return. One of my uncles; Ali (who was the brother of my mother) was not informed at all. One day when I was taken to the down town to take some photos for some official processes we met face to face with him and his son (Haider). They could not believe their eyes! To them I was a story of the past. Haider was a good friend of mine; we used to play together when we were in our village Kulajo, and he was very moved to see me alive. Well Haider's family and other relatives knew about my story. They started coming to visit me and started asking questions and somehow I could answer them in Kurdish because within one month I could improve my language.

Somehow I became popular and that put us under a new threat because the secret agents of the regime were always reporting what was happening around. Should the government caught me, the family of Alaisham's and myself will be in big troubles. Therefore, I had to go in hiding; for around two weeks I stayed day and night looking after sheep and cattle with a

* **When did you publicly spoke about your tragedy?**

- Do you mean when I made interviews with Media?

* **Yes, when and where you gave the first interview?**

- I cannot remember all the details. I gave lots of interviews, but I became popular only known after serving seven months as Peshmarga. The secretary general of the PUK and the top Peshmarga leader Jalal Talabani sent after me to meet him in his party's headquarter in Kalachwalan and to live in his house. I went there but Talabani was making tours to other places of the region. I stayed with one of the Peshmarga leaders his name was (Hemn Rash) a kind man who served me like a father. Mr. Talabani came back and interviewed me and adapted me as his son. He knew all most everything about me and about the Anfal Massacres. He told me that my life was very important to our nation and that he would keep me as a member of his own family and enforces a heavy guarding to protect me.

Jalal Talabani told me that there will be a day when Saddam Hussein will be brought before justice and that I will be an eyewitness on his crimes. He asked me about some details and I told him everything in a precise way and he accepted me as his own son. I spent five years with my new parents Jalal Talabani and Madam Hero Khan; they showed me a kind of love that I will never forget.

Naturally Talabani was visited by lot of delegations from the US, Europe, Arab countries and other parts of the world. He was always calling me to attend the meetings, telling them my real story. The guests were and house. Among the guests were delegations from Middle East Watch. The American personality Joost Hilterman and the Iraqi writer Kinan Makia were also there.

soldier. However I could meet him in 2009 when I visited Samawa. It was an impressive meeting to memorize our first meeting that took place at midnight in the middle of the grand desert, west of Samawa eleven years ago. I found the men as sympathetic as always. I really loved that family and while I was away in Kurdistan or in the United States I kept a good contact with them. Fazil, who was also in America, was kind enough to tell me everything about my Alaisham family.

* **How long did you stay in Samawa during your first visit?**

- I stayed around four weeks there, and when I came back to Kurdistan the uprising of the whole Iraqi nation started. I was told that Kalar, Kirkuk, and many other Kurdish cities were liberated. Similar news came from the Arabic areas especially from the southern cities. I was very delighted and decided to take people to the places where they shoot our brothers and sisters and through them to the pits dug by bulldozers.

But my dreams did not last long; the Iraqi army could crash the revolution and reoccupied most the liberated places. As the people wanted to avoid the oppression of the regime they left their homes to take refuge in mountains and remote areas. As for our part, we headed to Sharazoor then crossed the border to Iran. We were accommodated in a refugee camp near the border with Iraq called Chalarash. The life in the refugee camp was very hard, therefore I started doing business. I dealt with buying and selling sugar and tea.

Somehow my uncles did not want me to stay in Iran. They sent me to live with one of my cousin who lived in a place called (Bamo) in Iraqi Kurdistan, his name was Jalal and he was a Peshmarga. I liked to be a Peshmarga Commando as well, and my application was accepted and had a great new experience in my life.

- The main point was I was considered as Jalal Talabani's son whose party was in a big internal fight with Masud Barzani's party and there was a possibility to take me as prisoner! Fortunately the organization had agreed with fighting parties not to interfere in their affairs, and thus along with other people (who were also interviewed in 1992) we were taken by cars to Turkey. There was no airport in Kurdistan in 1990s, and thus travelling by car was the only choice.

*** Who were the other survivors of Anfal operations who travelled with you to the United States?**

- As I told I did not know any of them in the beginning. But later on we had got acquainted with each others. Their names were Uzer, Wahid and Ramadan. They came with their families. I was the only one who travelled on his own. The first town to stop over in Turkey was Slupi where the team who interviewed us in 1992 was waiting for us. Surprisingly they recognize all of us. *Joost Hiltermann* was waiting for us in the same team. Eventually we were all taken from Turkey to Guam city in the USA by a plane. I remained there until I was transferred to Virginia in 1997. I also remember that another Kurdish man was brought to America two years after us; his name was Faraj who could also survive from the mass killing and run to the safety from the mouth of the mass graves. I was a good listener to their stories

*** Were they willing to tell their stories?**

- Oh yes indeed.

*** Were the shooting occurred to all of them in the same way?**

- The shooting procedure was different from one group to another. In Faraj's case; two persons were tied together, taken to the edge of the grave to be shot together but the other three were

*** Can we remember the year when you were taken to meet Talabani who told you that Saddam Hussein will be traileed?**

- It was the beginning of 1992.

*** How was your reaction when were told about your role in the Tyrants' trail?**

- Telling you the truth I never expected the trail of that man and I had never taken it seriously. I was in the states when in 1997 I was asked by Braham Salih to make another interview and to talk about Anfal Crimes but I was reluctant! However, Barham could persuade me about the importance of my statements in the would-be Saddam Hussein's trail. He did his best to put my statements in writing. Days passed and the predictions of the Kurdish leaders became true. The trail took place and I found Saddam Hussein humiliated in front me in the court.

*** Well let us go back to 1990s when and how did you go to the USA?**

- It was in 1992 when I was first interviewed by the Middle East Watch. The organization went back to the States and issued a report about me as a witness of the Anfal Campaign for mass killing of women and children but it took about five years to hear from them again. In 1996 when the Iraqi government reoccupied Kurdistan Regional Capital Erbil, the Americans realized that my life would be threatened in Kurdistan although I was living in Talabani's headquarter. On 12th December 1996 I was taken by car from Sulemanya to Turkey.

*** Can you tell me about your reaction as you were going to leave Kurdistan and your people and to travel to one of the farer point on earth?**

that interviews and debates were very beneficial to the Kurdish question in the USA.

*** From our previous conversations, two other questions are raised in my mind; once you said you found Fazil in the states, and then you told me that you brought two of his daughters to America. Can you tell me the details of those two matters?**

- In the beginning we were accommodated in Guam, there we were told that we had to wait for two years to normalize our status in the USA. While in Guam, some friends had decided to go to see a movie but on the way to the cinema, I was attacked by some aggressors whom I did not know, and did not know the reason either. However, I returned the reasons to the following points; firstly I gave many speeches against the Iraqi regime and shed lights on their crimes, and secondly I spent several years in the house of Jalal Talabani and I was taken as his son.

Nevertheless, the American intelligence officer had soon arrived and controlled the situation, and put me in a safe place. I was soon visited by many Kurdish friends to demonstrate their support to me. The investigation had soon started. The special police department wanted to find out who the aggressors were and what their aim was! Interestingly they could find every detail about me in their computerized system as soon as they knew my name and personal ID.

The same investigators told me that an Iraqi Arab family is here in the states and they claim that they looked after you in Samawa. That news delighted me very much but because of security reasons they did not give any more information about them. My happiness was soon evaporated as I failed to find them as quickly as possible.

The presence of one my Arabic friends in my second country was a very important issue. As I had lost my entire family and because the Arabic grand family in Alaisham and

shot while they were still in the bus. The stories were too sad and too painful to me but I wanted to get a trace about my father.

*** Were you successful in getting any information concerning your dear father?**

- The fate of all the victims was the same but I did not get anything special about my father. The youth people were taken to the slaughtering place very quickly. Perhaps my father was with them but they did not know each other. They told me that their groups were mixtures of several parts of Kurdistan and that their conditions were similar to that of my father and my uncles.

*** Have been interviewed once more in the United States?**

- I don't know about the others, but I was interviewed over and over. TV channels, Radios, Newspapers and magazines were interested in my case. I was also invited to attend many meetings organized by concerned organizations. The topic was often about the genocidal process of Anfal on the one hand and on the other hand; the American Administration needed such t to justify toppling Saddam Hussein from pour.

I was willing to talk to everybody about the crimes committed by the overthrown regime of Iraq. I also met several Congressmen and provided them with many indications of the regime's exterminations policy. I paid visits to a number of Human Rights Organizations, to Arabic and Armenian communities to explain the real story of notorious Anfal.

The Churches were interested in my story as well. I attended some important conferences, Collin Powell had invited me to attend one of his political debates, and then he asked me to speak to the attendants and let them know to what extent the Ba'ath regime oppressive was. I can say with confident that all

We were living in our new house when Barham gave me a telephone call to tell me that an Arab man is looking for you. Barham told me that the man had said he was the son of the man from who helped you in Alaisham. For security reasons Barham did not give him my number until I allowed him to do so. The telephone rung; Fazil Alaisham was on the other end, he was the same young man who visited me in Kalar and we travelled together to Samawa for a family gathering. Fazil was Jahil's, brother the man who entered the house in Samawa with uniform and caused a great panic. Salih who arranged my family meeting was also a brother of them.

I expressed my happiness to hear from Fazil and asked for his address; he was living in Michigan, I bought an air-ticket, and paid him a visit. Our happiness was great to meet each other in the land of free, in the USA! Fazil was living with his wife and for children. One of his brothers, with whom I acquainted in Samawa, was also living with them. We spent few nice days together and I left them to go back to Virginia but remained in contact.

*** Did you ask them how they came to the USA?**

- Oh yes, I asked them. They were very grateful because during the Ba'ath rule I never mentioned their name otherwise I would have endangered their lives because helping a Kurdish child to stay alive was a subject for death penalty by Saddam Hussein. However, when in 1991 the Iraqi people stood up against the regime and the uprising was crushed by the army; many Arabs took refuge near the Saudi Arabia border and the US army protected them. While they were under that protection, they heard my story, the story of a Kurdish child who escaped the mass graves and was put up by an Arabic family, and then they went to the army headquarter that they are the same family who helped me. The Americans compared the information and

Samawa had saved my life, served me like their own child and exposed their lives to the threat of the most barbarian regime in the world. Therefore, finding them would have been a greatest achievement of my new life.

However, new changes were scheduled by the security officers (later on, I had got to know that they were called FBI). We have been told that we should move to the Virginia State. This movement was necessary for our security but it was saddening too because it would reduce the chances to find the Arab friends. The chances to find them in Guam were better than anywhere else because there was a strong likelihood of being brought to our place. Two reasons made that very possible; on the one hand the news was told by the FBI of Guam and on the other hand the Iraqis who were brought by the Americans were settled down in Guam. But the question that faced me was: What to do to find them?

This question remained without answer because on 27th February 1997 I was transferred to Virginia without being given the new address, but I was sure that I would be looked after there as well. When I arrived at (Ronald Regan) airport, I was received by a man who asked me if I was Taimur! We greeted each other then he said that he was the representative of Kurdistan Regional Government and the PUK in the USA. His name was Barham Salih, although I heard about him but that was the first time to meet him.

Barham Salih took me to his home and kept me there for seven months. I am grateful to his hospitality and generosity.

Shortly after my transfer, many others including Uzer were moved to Virginia. Barham and his wife Sarbach were of a great help to normalize my life in the new state. Uzer and I could find a house good for us all, I mean for his mother and his brother Nuri as well.

Amman to persuade the authorities there to keep them until the American visa will be issued for them. The whole thing took about six months and the girls arrived in the USA.

*** When could you return to Kurdistan for the first time?**

- The Middle East Watch was the organization that looked after us, they always advised us not to go back to Iraq. But when the American army entered Iraq, Faraj and Uzer paid the homeland a visit but I could only make it in 2005 and even after the fall of Saddam Hussein we were asked to be very cautious!

*** You were late somehow! Why was that?**

- As a matter of fact I liked to come back to Iraq straight after the fall of the dictator to visit the place where they had shot us, to see the place where my mother and my little sisters were buried. I also liked to show my great respect to Alaisham families in Samawa and the villages around. I liked to tell the whole world that Alaishams are the people who rescued me. I wanted to introduce that family to the Kurdistan Regional Government and to study the possibility of rewarding them and in the meantime to seek the families help to find the mass graves of our people.

Another reason to be late was my financial situation in the USA, unlike Europe there is no social help there, everybody has to work and make his leaving but the work needed good English language, and qualifications. We needed to look hard for a job and pay for your own transportation. These problems faced all of us, including Wahid, Uzer, Ramadan and Faraj who was the eldest among us. It was really unlike Europe where Kurdish refugees could help other to immigrate in Europe. Families in the states could live better than single people due to some social benefits.

found everything compatible, and they granted them the right of political asylum. Eventually they were brought to the states.

*** You mentioned that you could bring two of their daughters to the states! How could you arrange that?**

- As I told you, I knew through Fazil's family that two of Alaisham's daughters had managed to escape to Syria. Unfortunately the Syrian regime jailed them and only released them after paying big amounts of money by Fazil who visited them several times and eventually he could free the girls and take them to Jordan. In Jordan they faced a more serious problem as the government there was a pro Iraqi rulers' regime, they became a subject to be handed over to Baghdad! The Jordanian Monarchy was in a big harmony with Iraqi Ba'ath party; they were getting oil for free and in return they providing intelligence services to the dictator of Iraq!

This situation caused me a great pain. I realized that they suffered a lot because of their great favor to me. I thought very deeply to find a mean to help them. The first choice was to ask the Kurdish organization but the question was who would believe the story! The second choice was to talk to the American people who brought me to the states. Actually they were always in contact with me to see what I need. One day I talked to (*Joost Hiltermann*) and asked him if he could help them, he refused in the beginning but when I explained how serious their case was and how they helped to uncover the massacre of women and children during Anfal Genocidal Crimes. The gentleman was convinced and promised to give me the answer in few days time.

Luckily his answer came back in less than a week. He asked me about the address of the girls. I got all the necessary information from Fazil and passed them to him. Within a week he called me back saying that he could obtain the permission to bring them to the State. He also told me that he would go to

graves and bring the corpses back to Kurdistan. I made a request for that purpose but I was totally neglected.

*** Can you tell me how did you make your way to Kurdistan?**

- That is a good question! As there were no airports in Kurdistan, I flew to Syria and rented a car from there to Kurdistan. I took the same way back to America.

*** Were you officially asked to come back to attend the trial of Saddam Hussein?**

- No, not for the trial of Saddam Hussein but as an eye-witness of Anfal crimes hearings, and thus I attend the court on 27th November 2006.

*** OK, before coming back to the trial, you were in the states; were you interviewed by an Iraqi jurist delegation or the Supreme Court to take your testimony while you were still in the USA?**

- No, they did not come to interview me, but they met the other survivors of Anfal Campaign. They did not come to me because I was interviewed several times by FBI and most probably they got what they wanted from their archives.

*** Were there any American teams to escort you to Iraq and then back to the United States?**

- Yes we were under an intensive supervision of security bodies. My friends had noticed that too. Our cases were taken very seriously because we were eyewitnesses and survivors while others were witnessing about their relative victims or they have seen a part of Anfal processes. There were strong teams to protect us in the court, at the airport and everywhere. But we did not return all together to the states and I don't know whether the guarding was as serious as before.

As far as the topic is about jobs it's necessary to mention that while I was new in Virginia and was still living with Barham Salih, I looked intensively for a working place. Mr. Salih was helping me and through a friend of his we found a job; my duty was to collect automobile tyres and put them on each other. The job was too difficult for me injuries of shoulder and my back, especially some tyres were very huge and bulky, and thus I was obliged to leave it. I never stopped working; I worked in kitchens, restaurants and places to clean cars, I even worked for McDonalds but the work was a problem and the transportation was another one, I couldn't always afford it, therefore I was obliged to look for broken bicycles, repair them and travel with them. I spent hours working in the rain and sleeping in the cars. Mr. Qurbani can you remember that you called me once to attend a conference on Anfal in Kurdistan? Honestly and I only tell you now that I could not attend it because of financial problems. The other guys could not attend either because they didn't have money for the travelling cost.

*** How did you arrange your coming back in 2005? Were you invited by Kurdistan Regional Government?**

- No never. I was never invited by anybody. I only worked hard for a long time; I could make some money, make the journey and stay for three months in Kurdistan. My main object of the visit was to pay a visit to Samawa and the mass graves in the desert?

*** Could you achieve that object?**

- No, not that time. As the trial of the Iraqi criminals was going on, I was officially warned to be careful and to attend the court as an eyewitness of their heinous crimes, and thus it was too dangerous to travel alone and to search for the graves. I was also told the Kurdish authorities were interested to find the

weak child asks his teacher to get his pencil back from the wicked boy and the teacher does it. This would be a great relief for the oppressed child. Then imagine the feeling of a disappointed poor child like me from a remote village of Kurdistan taken at gun-point all the way to the middle of Arabia Desert to be shot with his little sisters and dear mother, and AK 47 machine gun working on him, and then left with all those corpses under the darkness of the night to be covered with the hot sand of the desert, and then he would survive by the will of God and to find the headsmen in front of him behind the bars of the Iraqi Court.

It is impossible to describe my feeling during long years of suffering and living without my family and it is also difficult to tell how great the relief was when I saw Saddam Hussein with head down to the ground.

*** What you said is quite understandable, but can you tell the changes that happened in your life in the aftermath of the trial?**

- Yes, the trial had caused remarkable changes in my life. I became confident and sure that every criminal will be punished no matter when or where, in front of justice or in the Day of Judgment.

*** When you found yourself face to face with the criminals were you dreaded or were you happy to find the brains of destructing the whole country behind the bars of the court?**

- I lived the happiest moments of my life. I did not have any fear whatsoever. Although Saddam Hussein wanted to threaten me by the way he glared at me during the oath but I did not give him a dam. I gave my statement very correctly and stood proudly in front the cameras of world's media.

*** How did you evaluate the predictions of Talabani and Salih about the inevitability of the over thrown regime's leaders?**

- I think you asked me that question before. In the beginning I was doubtful about their trail. But after all I appreciate their right prediction and evaluation. And I was very happy to see all those criminals in front of Iraqi judges.

*** What would have been your decision if you were a judge?**

- My will was to catch Saddam Hussein and chop him to pieces by my own hands. And I wished that all those who took part in our detention from Mlasura to Koratoo, Topzawa, and then to the killing fields in the Arabia desert. However, those who were trailed were less in number than the barbarian guards of one hall in Topzawa. I did not see one mercenary boss, army commander or a single killer from the Special Forces. None of those who cheated their own Kurdish brother to trust the Ba'ath regime only to get little amounts of dirty money. I hadn't seen those who were torturing women, children or elderly people standing trails.

*** How was the surprise when you entered the court and you found Saddam Hussein and his gang behind bars of the court, and in front of the judge?**

- Let us put it this way; for me as a child I think the response to the crime differs than that of an adult. I was only twelve years old when I became a subject to Anfal and to see all that women, young girls and children to be butchered and thrown to the pits in the desert therefore the impact was very effective on me because of the nature of the children. To make it clearer; imagine that a strong child in the school takes the pencil from one of his class-mate who is not strong as him, and then the

children were isolated and kept for three days before being transferred by sealed busses to the place of shooting. Here the judge asked for an explanation about sealed cars and I told him that they were without windows and without airing system.

I explained to the jury how two children died in the car because of no fresh air. I told them how we all suffered because of no air, no water, no food and nonstop driving without giving a smallest chance to use the water circuit. But when I spoke about a short stoppage at a military barracks to change the guards; the judge stopped me and asked me some questions about the details of that military camp but I apologized as I did not see anything because of our isolation from the whole world. However, I could help the judge by giving a list of the names of most of the victims with personal details, and then I described the diversion from asphalted road to a dusty one and I had to tell the jury how did I realized that as I was in a sealed car! I told him that I could feel it from the movement of the car.

They forwarded even more questions when I reached the point of shooting. He asked me about the position of the soldiers, the type of their weapons, the way they shot us and the dimensions of the pits and the number of people who were shot simultaneously with me.

Eventually when I came to the story of my survival through the Arab friends, his honor asked me about the name of the people with their addresses but I denied giving such details because of their security as the trial was directly aired but I promised to tell them everything afterwards.

*** What was his final question?**

- He asked me two related questions: the first one was if I wanted to bring legal suit against anybody and if I wanted to ask for compensations! Concerning the first one I said that I wanted to incriminate Saddam Hussein and his cousin Sergeant Ali Hassan as war-criminals. I deliberately mentioned his old

*** How did Saddam Hussein threaten you? Did he pronounce any word by that meaning?**

- It was like that; when I put my hand on the Holy Quran to tell the truth all the truth, everybody including the criminals stood up. At that time Saddam Hussein was playing with his beard and swung one of his fingers under his chin as a signal that my throat will be chopped off if I speak against him. Over and above there was a propaganda circulating that Saddam's Al-Ba'ath Party would kill and body who witness against their party boss. The rumor was claiming that the whole court would be blown on the first day of Hussein's trial but they failed to do so as the trial place was unknown, and that when the trial went on Saddam had mentioned the name of the place and that, some rockets were launched on that area.

All those false propaganda were launched to frighten the witnesses to prevent them from pronouncing their claims against the dictator. Therefore Saddam Hussein's hint to me was meaningless. He only made me more decisive.

*** Will you be so kind to tell me some details about the court and about your statements?**

- In the beginning, His Honor the Judge had asked me to take the legal oath by putting my hand on the Holy Quran and say (I tell the truth all the truth) and I did. During the oath everybody stood up and I saw the two biggest criminals Saddam Hussein Al-Majeed and his cousin Ali Hassan Al-Majeed with a group of other criminals standing in the dock of the court. The judge then asked me to start giving my statement as a witness. And then I narrated the story from our village Kulajo to Telako, Mlasura and Koratoo and how they kept us for ten days as prisoner in the fort of Koratoo, and then how they transferred us to the notorious concentration camp of Topzawa by Lorries belong to civilian owners. I told the judge how they separated men and young boys and took them away while the women and

Another defense lawyer asked me; how did I know that my father was killed for men were separated from their families and I stayed with the women! I told him that I had never said that my father was killed but all I said that he was taken to an unknown place and he is lost since. I also told them if the troops were ordered to kill women and children so ruthlessly what would the fate of young men look like?

The lawyer of Saddam Hussein had also concentrated on the same issue that I told the Bedouin Arab Man at the very first night that my father and mother were killed. Her I realized that interpretation was not very accurate for I told the court that my mother and three sisters were shot dead in the same pit with me. Here, the judge interfered by saying that because of the difference of the language there were a lack of understanding.

The lawyer tried to stimulate the national issues by saying that Arabs are bold people and they don't shot women and children. I replied his claim by saying the issue is not about whether Arabs are bold or not, but it's their leadership that lost every human sense decided to exterminate the Kurdish nation. I explained to all of them how I could get out from the pit to ask one of the soldiers to stop shooting and how I found his eyes full of tears for he was killing innocent people against his will and that he was fulfilling the order from the top people in the ruling party. Here the lawyer said: "How old you were to realize that the orders were coming from the top?" Although the judge answered his question, I interfered to humiliate the lawyer by asking him: "Why can't you calculate my age by yourself as far as you know that I was born in 1976 and the Anfal Extermination Operations were performed in 1988?"

Ali Hassan Al-Majeed had also asked a hail of questions. He started with asking me for how long could I stay without being caught by his security forces and I told him for around ten days, and then he asked me how long I stayed in the village; my answer was between two to three months and I tried

rank to tell the whole world that he was never qualified as an army officer but unfortunately the interpreter ignored what I said. His second and last question was if I wanted to be compensated? Her I told the jury the whole wealth of the world will not compensate one finger of my dad but I will accept whatever decided by the court.

*** What did Saddam and Ali Hassan Al-Majeed, and their partners say when you spoke about mass killing and that you charged them as responsible for ordering their troops to perpetrate all those crimes?**

- Saddam Hussein did not open his mouth but his lawyer was very talkative he asked the jury about the way the tribunal was going on. He asked a lot about the formality and legality of the court and the way I made my statement. Then he asked me about the dimensions, depth and size of the pits and the distance between them; my answer was the width of each ditch was about the width of the bulldozer's blade which two meters and a half and the distances between them was about one meter and a half. They lawyer rejected my answer saying that a bulldozer cannot work in that small spaces. He casted doubt whether a pit of that size would take that much corpses.

The lawyer wanted to motivate the nationality question by asking me if there were Arabs and Kurds living together in the village where I was rescued and if there were no Kurds how could I make them understand what my problem was! He also asked me how I knew that the village was an Arabic one. I answered him very carefully; I told him the village was in the heart of the desert near Nugra Salman Prison that neighbors Saudi Arabia. I was very cautious not mention the name of the village because that what he was after. And the head of the court had answered the question of understanding each other by saying that some Arabs speak Kurdish.

in my survival. Barzani hold a special meeting with to express his gratefulness and told him that he was willing to invite us to visit Kurdistan and to bring his family to enjoy his hospitality in Erbil.

Barzani told Fazil that the Kurdish people would never forget Alaisham's Favor therefore he is looking forwards to seeing them in Kurdistan. We were very pleased by this kind invitation and started making a plan to pay him a visit. And thus we came back to Kurdistan in 2009; we spent some days in the hospitality of the PUK in Sulemanya. We were put up in a hotel. Fazil called his family and told them about the visit to the President of Kurdistan Region Masud Barzani.

Fazil's brother Sheikh Muhammad and his cousin Hussein came to us in Sulemanya. (Mr. Qurbani; remember you visited us in the same hotel!) However we made a telephone call to the representative of president's Fuad Hussein and told him that we are here in response to Mr. Barzani's invitation. After waiting for few days the man called back to tell as the president is willing to see us.

Once we arrived in Erbil we were taken to meet the minister of Anfal and Martyrs Affairs with whom we had a long discussion about Anfal Operations and the Mass-graves. I expressed my discontent about poor services and lack of help to the victims of Anfal, and the delay in bringing back the corpses to the soil of Kurdistan. I also criticized the poor attention paid by the regional government to Garmian area where most of the Anfal crimes and demographic changes taken place. It seemed that His Highness the minister did not accept my remarks and asked the president to cancel his meeting with us, and thus the meeting was canceled!

I was deeply shocked by that. Many times I asked myself what the reason was; do our people hate the truth? Is it too bad to tell them to help the victims of the Ba'ath regime? Was it too much to let the international community know what

to make him understand that safety was important to me and not the calculation of days or weeks. Apparently he asked me if was in hiding how could I get food! My answer was that my cousin who was a shepherd had managed that for me. Then he came back to ask me when I can open the tie on my eyes why I did not did the same to my mother and sister and why the soldier did not eye folded me once more? My answer for his both questions was were soon asked to get off the bus.

He tried hard to get a slip of the tongue from by mentioning the year 1987 as the year of Anfal but I corrected for him that my family and I were detained in April 1988. Eventually the criminals and their lawyers could not influence the court but our questioning that lasted one hour and fifty minutes was very informative.

It is worth mentioning it that at one point Ali Hasan confessed that all the villages of Kurdistan were turned to (Muharrama) land or land of no man! He mentioned that to contradict my claim when I spoke about hiding in remote villages.

*** When your role as a witness in the Supreme Iraqi Court in Baghdad was over; did you come back to Kurdistan or returned to the United States?**

- Actually I liked very much to stay longer in Iraq and pay a visit to Alaisham, Samawa and the near-by Mass Graves but I could not because we had to return with the same American escorting team.

*** When could you come back once more to Kurdistan?**

- In 2009. It happened that when we as Kurdish community met Masud Barzani during his visit to the states in 2008, I attended the meeting with Fazil and asked Qubad Talabani to introduce him to Barzani as one of the Arab men who took part

contact his office in Sulemanya and an interview was promised in Erbil, we were there right in time but we could not see anybody and we were given another appointment in Sulemanya, and thus we had got some free days to see some of our relatives in Kalar and neighboring areas. We were back to Sulemanya but the vice president was not there! I was obliged to try to take the man to meet Talabani and could arrange a telephone call with his wife who adapted me before being taken to America. Madam Talabani called her husband in Baghdad and a meeting was promised as soon as he comes back from Baghdad and in case the meeting wouldn't prevail in Sulemanya another one would be arranged in Baghdad.

The president of Iraq came back and sent a welcoming comment and 26th June 2009 was set as a meeting day. Mr. Talabani knew that I was of Jaf family, therefore he invited several personalities from the Jaf tribes to attend the meeting, and as our part we were a mixture of Kurds and Arabs including two of my uncles from Kalar. Jalal Talabani gave a toast to welcome the Alaisham guests saying that they did us, as the Kurdish people a great favor; they saved the life of a young boy who became the most important witness in the case of Anfal Genocidal Campaign. They also praised them for their sacrifices and exposing themselves to death penalty by the overthrown regime.

Talabani as a president of Iraq had ordered the establishment of medical center and an intermediate School in the Village of Alaisham. The meeting and the good news for Alaisham were broadcasted on radio and TV and made the Headlines of the PUK newspapers. In the End Fazil told Talabani that the rest of his family are willing to visit Kurdistan and see Taimur or (Ali Alaisham) again but the president said that he had a better suggestion by sending me to Samawa and he arranged for body guards, air tickets from Sulemanya to

Anfal was about? Isn't it strange that half of the Kurdish people don't know what Anfal is? Isn't it worth to erect a monument in Garmian for the martyrs of Anfal? Over and above president guests are coming from the United States and from very dangerous areas of Iraq without being allowed to see the president. I was really disappointed and did not know what to tell my friends!

*** Did you stay longer in Erbil or came back to Sulemanya?**

- We came back to Sulemanya and kept waiting for a solution. The friends from Samawa were in a hurry, they wanted to go back home. This I did not like to happen, I did not want them to be disappointed and wouldn't like to create such bad reputation to my nation especially we have a self ruling government and in a position to reward our good friend. I thought deeply to find a way to keep our pride as proud Kurds. An idea came to my mind and that was to meet Jalal Talabani through one of the Peshmarga Commander, through (Othman Mahmud) who was the leader of the unit when I served in the PUK forces. I paid him a visit at his home and asked to contact Talabani and to tell him about our guests.

Mahmud was a very nice person but his problem was he had already left Talabani's line to join the Change Movement. But he did not want to disappoint us and called (Emad Ahmad) the deputy prime minister of Kurdistan and a date was fixed, the meeting took place and the man rewarded the guest by presenting them a Land Cruiser Jeep and a Pistol carrying the seal of the president of Iraq. This was very appreciable but Fazil was still willing to meet Barzani, on the first hand to fulfill his promises given in the USA and on the second hand he liked Barzani very much.

I only thought of one way to reach the man and that was through the vice president (Kosrat Rasul). We could

come to the town. The pick-up driver was there, too. I asked about the elderly lady who escorted me from the tent to the village of Al-Aisham. I still remember how she was hiding me under her black veil not to be seen by troops or military police. She was not there. I asked for her and was told that was admitted to a hospital. I paid her a visit and met some relatives of her who came to visit her.

My uncle Rauf wanted to express his appreciations by giving a nice speech to the crowd thanking them for all their efforts to save my life and for their unique challenge of the headsmen of the regime. He apologized very politely for not being able to visit them regularly because of the horrible situation that the old regime imposed on them. He finished his speech by saying that under normal conditions he would had paid them visits even if he travels on his foot. The family thanked him for his appreciations and they also expressed their gratefulness to me as under no condition I mentioned any of their names or the name of their places, because as they said their people would have been exterminated all together and their village leveled with the earth in the same way the regime did with Dujeil and its inhabitants.

*** Did you use that great opportunity to find the place where you shot, where you were buried and where you found the Bedouin family?**

- Oh yes that was the main question. We started in the afternoon of the same day touring the grand desert. It was very spacious; there was no land-mark whatsoever, no mountains, no trees, no rivers and no houses. We could see nothing but white sand and a type of thorn known as (Agool) or cactus in English. Here I thanked my God again because he had sent the Bedouins for my rescue not for breeding animals in a place where there was no pasture at all.

Baghdad and special transporters from the Capital to Alaisham village.

*** When did you start your journey?**

- I don't know the exact day.

*** Can you remember the month?**

- It was the beginning of July; we spent one night in presidential rest house and headed to the south with a big convoy of body guards! We reached Samawa in time and met some other local people in a car to guide us to the right place. Because we had had a long convoy of cars the local police accompanied us in the city

Actually we neither needed family car nor police to guide or to protect us. Fazil knew the streets of the city very well and the presidential guards were heavily armed. There were armored cars with big gun machines escorting our convoy. The armed convoy reminded me with the similar military killing mission that took me to the killing field in the south of Iraq. Time has changed; this time I was honored with my Arab friends, go not for killing anybody but to open class rooms for students and clinics for curing poor patients.

However, we took the family house in which I lived for about two years as our first station. The owner of the house had invited lot of other people to greet me as an honored guest. We received a friendly welcome. I felt that I am once more between my Arabic families. What was significant to me was the presence of Ganim who offered me the first-aid of life when he put me up in his Bedouin tent in the desert and cared after my wounds. Yes I met Ganim for the first time after he brought me to the Alaisham village on the very first day. Ganim was the man whom I always missed. I asked for him several times during my two years stay in Samawa but I was always told that he was working near Saudi border and it was not easy for him to

hide my real feeling by resorting to smoking but I found they were more afflicted than me!

*** Did you uncover any of the graves to make sure that the corpses were there?**

- No, we needn't do that because I was pretty sure that I was in the right place. Over and above we found the shells of the bullets that penetrated our bodies. By having a closer look we found some old bullet cases near the bones of our victims because the fleshes were disintegrated but the bones and the bullets remained. Among the other findings were pieces of Kurdish traditional clothes for boys and girls. There was a pink blouse that was probably worn by a seven year old girl eaten up by dogs in the area!

*** Don't you think that she was the same little girl who stayed alive and refused your help to go out of the trench saying that she would not leave her mother's corps? Can we remember the color of her blouse?**

- I am not sure about that, and I cannot remember in what color she was dressed. It was too dark to see that and the color of blood was dominating and painting everything. But many possibilities were standing like; she might have left the grave afterward but could not continue because of dehydration and starvation or was just eaten by dogs. In the end I am sure about one thing and that the dress was belonging to an innocent little girl.

*** What else could you see in the area?**

- That is a good question. I can tell that there was another big trench of mass graves near our place. I know that and sure about it because I had left a flat plain but it was turned to elevated small hills made by bulldozers that covered the graves. Another,

The local Arabs who were accompanying us tried hard to find the mass graves but unfortunately they failed to find any trace. They were looking at me in a mood to give up but I said no! I can find them; just take me to the place where I met Ganim and I will do the rest. We were taken to that place which was nothing but another part of a big desert. There I started to think deeply and to regain the video images printed in my brain, I asked Ganim to use his memories to tell me whatever he could remember. One thing stimulated me not to give up was (if I am allowed to say that) there was a soul connection between me and my dear mother and sisters. My heart became my guide and we took a route that I used in a dark night of 1988. It was difficult to find any trace due to the nature of the desert and the fact that I walked in a dark night.

I understood that one of the reasons of choosing deserts for mass graves was the impossibility to trace them after the regime's fall. Should the mass killing and bloodshed happen in Kurdistan a lot of tulips and narcissus would have grown every spring in their place! But the desert gives nothing but prickles. The situation was by no mean easy but I was very determined and I was sure that my love to my mother would never disappoint me. We searched a lot but I felt that my heart beats are telling me that I am close to my beloved ones. We reached a place where I told everybody that the corpses were there! The time was late in the afternoon, the sun was shining on our shoulders, but I was living the moments of the fire squads of the dark night that was happening in that place I told my uncles that the corpses of their wives and children were buried there. They could not control themselves and started wailing and lamenting. There were some other relatives who accompanied us and they all, had shared the sad moment as, they too, have lost their dear once. As I suffered more than anybody else in the group I wanted to show more control and to

remained unknown. But what was important is how I could survive the wolves and wild dogs.

To be somehow precise, it was the sunset time when the shooting started but before making my way I had fainted twice and I don't know how long did it take to revive. Presumably, it took me about three hours to find my great friend. In the next morning of my arrival I was taken to Alaisham village for treatment and thus I did not get familiar with the area to see where the pit was. Uncle Abd who took me by his pick-up to their village spoke about that early morning journey saying that we were stopped by a military car on the same road not by a check point and that they wanted to know why we were in a hurry and when they knew that there was a patient in the car, they allowed us to continue.

*** How long did you stay in Samawa, Alaisham and the desert all together?**

- We spent one night and two days all together. We could have stayed longer but the thing was that the presidential guards had other duties to do and they could only stay for a night. Therefore we were in a hurry, and just after having lunch in Samawa we headed to the heart of the desert searching for the mass graves. The discovery mission was over, and then we returned to Alaisham village to spend the night there; a night full of memories in a place with lots of faithful people, with my brothers and those who made me the greatest favor of the whole life.

Fortunately the governorate of Samawa had taken part in honoring our mission by presenting a ceremonial party to which tens of chieftains, celebrities and high ranked officials attended it. The party was arranged by the governor (Abraham Mayaly) and his deputy Muhammad Ziadi. The ceremony started by recitation of holy Quran and reading (Alfatiha) to the soul of our Martyrs in Anfal Campaigns and all the victims of

yet, more evidence was small pieces of black clothes which were partly covered with the sand, those pieces were used to eye fold the victims before shooting them. My relatives could also find some water battles used by the victims. All those evidences were pain full but the Kurdish bodyguards had also deepened my pains because they were in uniforms similar to those of the over thrown regime. It is not excluded that the soldiers who shot us were also from the forces of presidential guards. What a strange life! Some twenty years ago the troops were there to kill us but they are with us to protect us.

*** When you were taken there for the first time and left the place at a dark night to find a safe place you did not know for how long you walked but this time you travelled by cars with guides can you tell how far Ganim's tent was?**

- It was about ten minutes by car.

*** How long did it take on foot if you walked from the hell of the mass-graves to the place where the tent was erected?**

- I was horrified, terrified and agonized. My aim was to get away from the headsmen as soon as possible! I did not think about how long I kept going and did not think about any target. Safety came first I was carrying to bullets in my little body, and my wounds were bleeding. I cannot remember whether I was slow or fast and I don't remember the distance from the graves to the Alaisham. However the only person who knew the distance was Ganim the owner of the tent and I did not ask him at spot but when I saw him for the last time I asked him the same question; all he knew is that I arrived at twelve o'clock mid night in a dark night of May but he knew nothing about when and from where I started, and thus the time taken had

Hussein, Khalid and Muhammad. It was the right time to show them our hospitality, firstly we put them up in Sulemanya to show them around then we took them to Kalar to visit the other parts of my family. Eventually we could visit some of Kurdistan's touristic sites. Although I was saddened after the touring a desert of mass graves but I found myself in debt to my Arab families. Fazil and stayed in Sulemanya and the rest had left to their homes.

We extended our stay in Kurdistan in hope to get a chance to meet the president of the region Masud Barzany and that happened only when we met by chance on his chief Peshmarga in the hotel were stayed in Sulemanya. The man was called (Nuri Hama Ali) who was also from my mother's family and because he was close to the president's administration I told him the story of our failure to visit Barzani. The man reacted swiftly and arranged the meeting in two days.

We found Barzani waiting for us in person; he took us to his guest palace, welcomed us very warmly and repeated his gratefulness to Alaisham families and told us that he will be willing to see us any time we come back to Kurdistan. We left Barzani amazed by his hospitality and generosity. He assured us that he would have received us as early as we came back from the states but nobody had ever informed him about our request to see him. The man also expressed his appreciation to what had been done by our Arab brothers. We left the place happily because we achieved the main goal of our journey to Kurdistan.

*** As you are the only survivor of the Women and Children Mass –Graves, and as you are considered a symbol of Anfal what to you do for the mass graves if you are authorized to plan something for them?**

- I will plan to bring all the corpses back to Kurdistan, make DNA test for all of them to decide who is who, and then giving back to their families. The families will have a choice to choose

extermination policy of the overthrown regime. In a speech given by the introducer the role of Alaisham family to rescue a child whose entire family members were exterminated, was highly appreciated because they challenged the risk of the death penalty should the regime became aware of that involvement. He told them that the child's name is Taimur who is grown up to pay a visit on his will and bringing his relatives to appreciate the favor of Alaisham family.

The deputy governor highlighted his remarks on the reality of the brotherhood between Kurds and Arabs and mentioned Taimur story as an indisputable example. Hussein who was my childhood friend, Presented a long poem on the Occasion. Then I was given a turn to give a speech; I concentrated on the good relations between the Arabic and Kurdish nation I mentioned Saladin as a great example, and then I evaluated the sacrifices of the Alaisham in reviving my life. I pointed out to the dirty purpose of Saddam Hussein who wanted by employing chemical weapon and mass killing of the innocent to destruct the brotherly relation

A speech was arranged and given by a Kurdish man in behalf of my family. The man was called (Abu Kawa) a Kurd who lived there for long years and learnt a good Arabic, and could represent my family and express my agony in a perfect way. The celebration was ended by giving the most generous dinner that I have seen in my whole life. Thus we spend a night in the village provided with special tents and we left to Baghdad in the next day but we returned to Kurdistan the day after.

*** Your good friend Fazil came back with you from the USA to Kurdistan then he accompanied you to the south of Iraq, did he stay in Samawa or continued the journey with you?**

- Good to remind me! Fazil came back to Kurdistan with several common relatives and friends; among them were

lot. They sacrificed with their lives, properties and future to save me and to hide me and then finding a way to take back to the place I belong. I am grateful to Talabani and family they looked after me as their son. Barham Salih was very helpful and cooperative while I was new in the USA; he opened his house door to me and put me up for seven months. They helped me to stand on my feet in a country where I did not speak their language. Our uncle Sarhad Younis came to my rescue in a very critical time, and also the Peshmarga leader Hemn paid a good attention to me while I was waiting to meet Jalal Talabani for the first time. In the end I must appreciate your efforts Mr. Qurbani to put my story in a book; I'm sure it needs lot of work.

* **And if I am allowed to ask whom do you blame!**

- I blame the Regional Government of Kurdistan for not working hard on Anfal issue and not caring much after those whose care takers were exterminated, and almost doing nothing for the survivors of Anfal's mass graves. I would like also to admonish the KRG for not documenting Anfal crimes or keeping archives about them. The question that comes up here is where is an appropriate center for studying the Anfal crimes and their consequences? Isn't 22 year of self governing long enough to establish researching centers and museums to collect whatever information and materials available? I think we will lose an important part of our current history if nobody listens to the survivors.

Hundreds of thousands of Kurds had been massacred, deported or forced to change their nationality or leaving their home land forever, the whole nation is affected; therefore serious scientific, social, psychological and political researches must be performed on high levels. We can be assisted by other nations through employing their experts. We can let our academies, universities and institutes become involved. Related books must be published in different languages. Indeed Anfal

the place to bury them. Nevertheless the mater must be dealt on the national level because the campaign had aimed the extermination of the Kurdish people. I think we can show these facts to our visitors by erecting symbolic monuments to them especially in the place where big numbers of people were taken to be massacred. There is a monument as (Debna) stands in front of rzgary village which was known as Smud camp is an ideal place for my massacred family and the other relative because the remaining members of our village are living in this Rzgary village.

* **Have ever had a close look at Debna monument?**

- Oh yes, I was very delighted to learn that we have one in our place. Such monuments became land marks in several countries who gave big sacrifices to liberate their countries and I was quick to visit it but when I reached there I was prevented to enter it by the guards and I was only allowed to see what was inside after an explaining who I was. I was not very content with the monument because the internal part was built like a grave; and her I suggest that our government will take the examples of the States and Europe countries to erect attractive monuments.

* **After all that happened to you during and after Anfal can you name anybody you owe him a lot?**

- First of all I am in debt to my parents and my sisters because on the one hand, they were exterminated by our enemies and I could do nothing for them, and on the other hand their corpses hand been neglected in the desert for the last 25 years. True, that it is beyond of my ability to transfer them to Kurdistan for only governments can do that but I feel I failed to do enough to stimulate the authorities to do that.

After my family, I am greatly in debt to Alaisham's, to all of them; men women and children. They had all served me a

month. Although the decision is not circulated yet and the issue is yet pending between the routine papers of Anfal and Martyrs Ministry, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, there might be a chance for improving it in future. However, I am not sure whether families can live on such salaries.

*** Since the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein, the Kirkuk is managed by Kurdish administration and it is relatively peaceful, so did you visit the halls of Topzawa Concentration Camp?**

- No, never ever I want to see the place where I was separated from my father forever.

*** How about Koratoo?**

- I did not visit that place either.

*** Did you visit Mlasura?**

- Not either.

*** And your own village Kulajo?**

- Yes, when I came back in 2005 from the States I paid a visit to my village and I will do that very often.

*** How many families are back to the village?**

- There around fifteen of them.

*** Are there projects to serve the new inhabitants?**

- What services are you talking about? Our people are deprived from the simplest rights as human beings.

*** Are there roads opened, schools and clinics established? What about drinking water and main power?**

and the employment of Weapon of Mass Destructions must become schools and universities programs. Our present and next generations must learn every detail about those crimes and a better care paid to the victims and afflicted people. In the end fair compensation must be paid to the victims and rebuild the destroyed villages and towns, and every occupied piece of land must be given to the original owner in Kurdistan and all the other parts of Iraq.

*** You are currently in Kurdistan, do you go back to the States or you stay for good?**

- Telling you the truth I am tired of being away from my home-land all my life. I suffered a lot because of being as a Kurd and want to enjoy my life here as a citizen of Kurdistan.

*** My next question is a bit personal; feel free to answer it or to reject it. The question is: As you are the only survivor among the massacred groups of women and children, and also a symbol of our anfaled people and a servant to publicize the issue of Anfal crimes, may I ask about the salary set to manage your daily life especially you had set your mind on staying here with us?**

- I feel very sad to mention that the salary I take home is only good to visit the filling station two times per month.

*** Why, how much is it?**

- 250\$

*** Recently the government decided to grant you salaries; is it the salary too little? Is a pensioner salary?**

- No, the salary that I mentioned is specified as political prisoner, but a rumor speaks about raising it to USD 500 a

THIS A STORY OF A LITTLE BOY(TAIMUR) WHO WAS TAKEN A LONG WITH HIS MOTHER AND THREE YOUNGER SISTERS TO THE PITS OF THE MASS GRAVES IN A LARGE DESERT SOUTH WEST OF BAGHDAD, WHERE HE WAS EXPOSED TO A SYSTEMATIC FIRE-SQUAD BY SADDAM HUSSEIN TROOPS WITHIN THE ANFAL GENOCIDAL OPERATION.

DESPITE HIS BLEEDING WOUNDS AND DEHYDRATION, TAIMUR MADE HIS WAY TO SAFETY THROUGH THE DESERT, IN THE DARKNESS AND AMONG THE WILD PREDATORY ANIMALS.

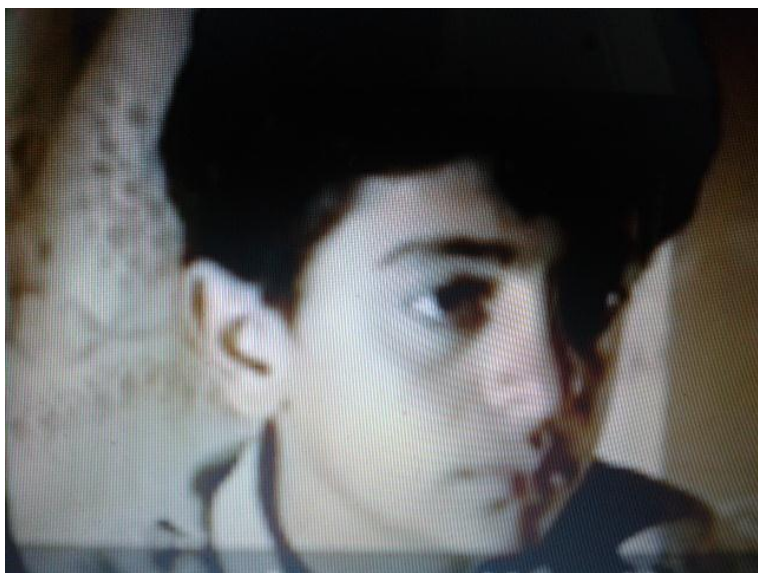
- I think that you personally know (Gwinn Roberts) he works as a film director on Anfal; he is supported by the head of our government (Nechirvan Barzani). Gwinn had made a film about the village and my life which was seen by Nechirvan and knew that I was the only survivor; he had just ordered to connect the village with an asphalt road from Smud and to build a school and a clinic for us. And that is all the village had got.

*** My last question is a nasty one; where do you want to be buried when you die?**

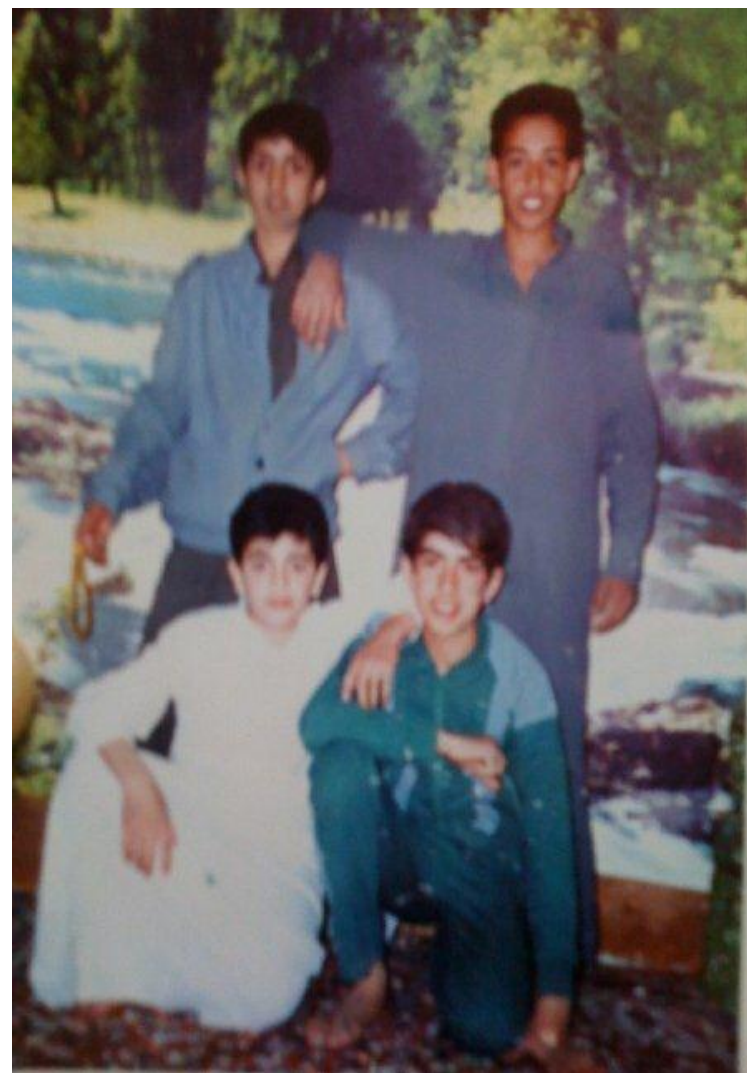
- Actually, I never thought about any particular place. To me the entire land of Kurdistan is the same. In the meantime I work hard to bring the corpses of family members back to our land and to be buried round the Debna Monument. And as for my part, I would like to be buried there as the only survivor of the women and children victims during the notorious Anfal.

*** Thank you very much dear Taimur for this inclusive interview. I will try my best to publish it in a book.**

- I am grateful to your efforts to serve the Anfal issue and I hope that I will get a copy of the book.



Taimur After his return to Kurdistan in 1991



Taimur (in white) with his Arab Friends in Samawa, after his survival from the mass graves



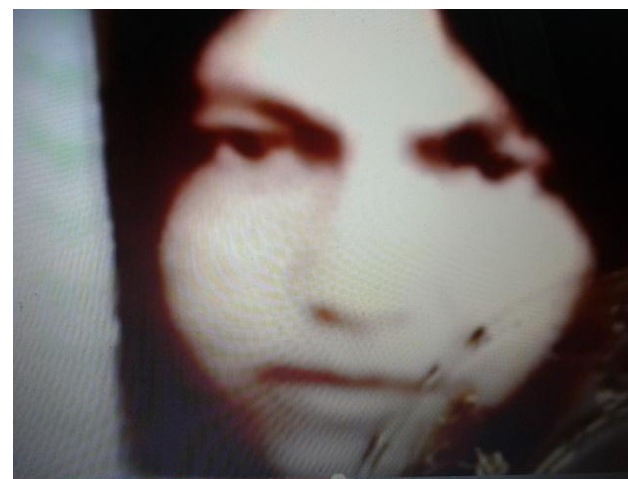
Taimur & Arif Qurbany – 2009 -



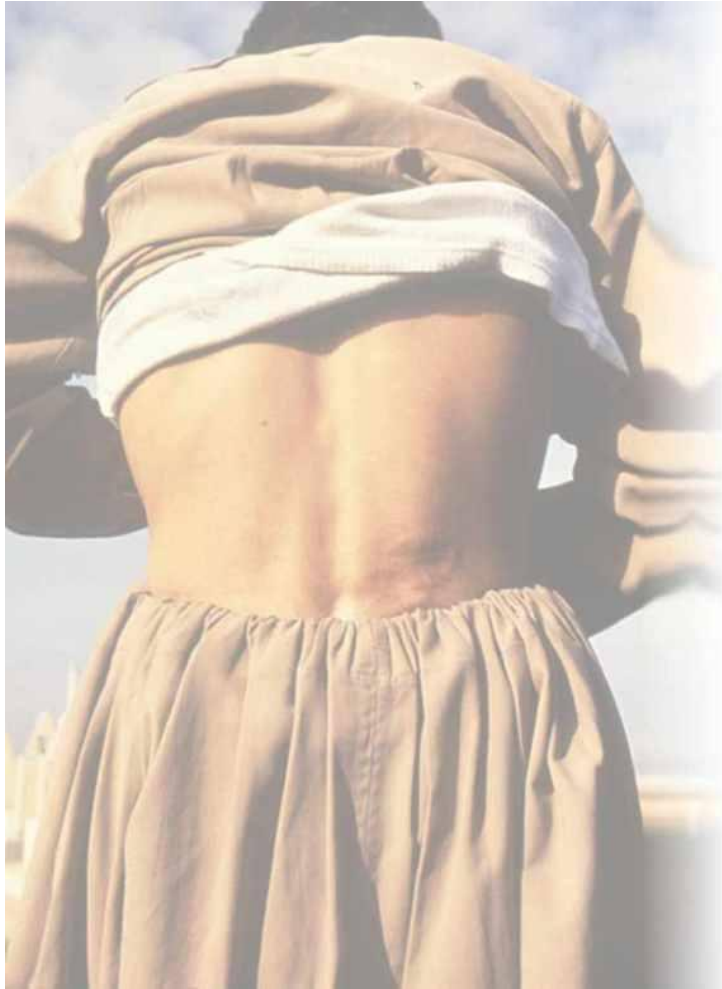
Taimur talks to the Author 2013



Abdulla Ahmed, his father



Sara Muhammad, his mother



The trace of the bullet during the mass-killing



His present home in Anfal Quarter in Rzgary/
Kalar



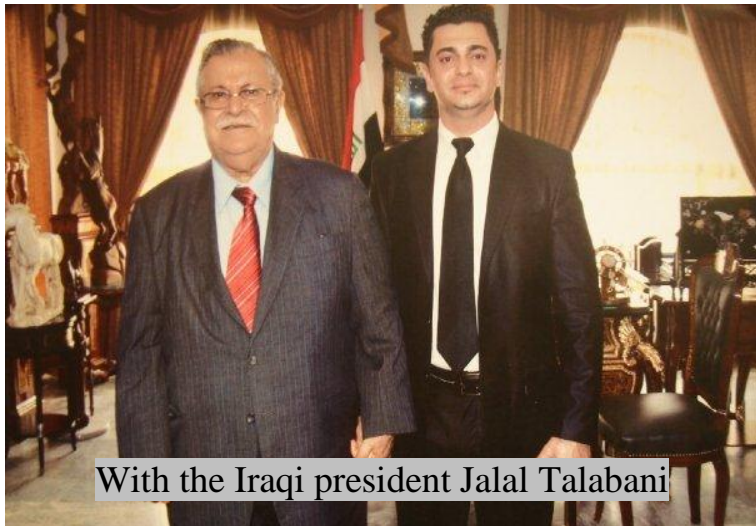
As a witness against Saddam Hussein on 27th
Nov. 2006



The top Ba'ath criminals behind bars



Pays respect to the soil of Kulajo



With the Iraqi president Jalal Talabani



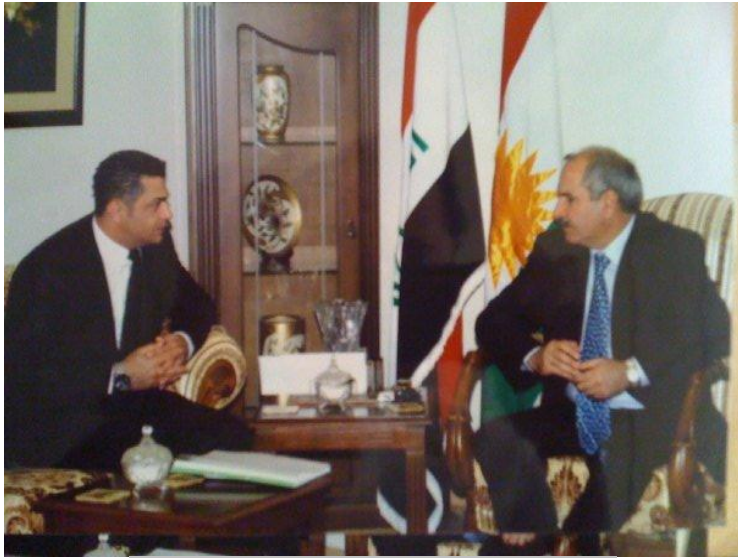
With the president of Iraqi Kurdistan region,
Masood Barzani



Judge Mohammed Oraibi



His first return to his second mother in Samawa from
the USA in 2009



With Eimad Ahmad in Kurdistan



With Barham Salih in Kurdistan



His contribution in recognizing Saddam's crimes as acts of genocide



With Nechirvan Barzani in the USA



The team that transferred him to the USA



With Colin Powell (2004) in a joint meeting about Saddam's crimes in Iraq



With some members of the Arab family who rescued him



Arab personalities headed by the deputy governor of Samawa giving a warm reception to him



Giving a speech during his reception in Al-Aisham



Received by Ibrahim Mayaly the governor of Samawa in 2009



With Ganim, the first person who took part in rescuing him



With Abdd



In the Arabic house of Samawa were he was kept and looked after secretly for two years



Karima/ the lady who taught him the Arabic language



The governor of Samawa, Ibrahim Mayaly



In the desert where he was exposed to the fire-squad



Some views of the Arab Tribes' reception when he visited them in 2009

Arif Qurbany

TAIMUR

THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN
ANFAL MASS GRAVES

□



His present life in Rzgary- Anfal quarter