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The Grand Ayatollah Khomeini was in the position of being able to declare a Jihad during the Iran-Iraq War; however he did not do so because of the expected consequences. Saddam Hussein called for Jihad on numerous occasions when he felt himself threatened and not Islam! For this reason, he only received a weak response from the Iraqi people and next to no answer from the Pan-Arab nations.

While Jihad has been successfully accomplished at different times in the Islamic era, notably under Salahadin's leadership, no-one apart from Saddam Hussein has ever used Anfal against any group or nation in the known history. He used Anfal operations to try and exterminate a nation, whom he had previously called "our people" and "our brothers."

With the Ba'ath Party coming to power, a process of arabization of Kirkuk City and other Kurdish towns bordering the arab-speaking region of Iraq commenced and continued without ceasing. This process included the confiscation of Kurdish homes and properties, the deportation of Kurdish families, and the settlement of Arab families into these

Introduction by the translator:

The genocide committed against the Iraqi Kurds by the regime of Saddam Hussein in 1988 was one of the most systematic mass killings from the post World-War two era.

These multiple acts of genocide came under the name, Anfal: a name that points to the eighth of the Qur'an' 114 Suras. This Sura is composed of 75 verses and almost all of them deal with the extremity with which you treat your enemy: how and when to use extreme action and how to forgive and take a peaceful stand when the enemy declares peace. One of the most forceful verses in this 'Anfal' Sura is verse 60 which states, "Prepare whatever force you can to terrorize God's enemy and your enemy."

Running alongside this Anfal extremity is 'Jihad,' which is already well known to Western media and concerned experts as 'Islamic Holy War.' There is no Sura entitled or dedicated to Jihad but this concept is mentioned several times in different chapters. Jihad is understood as going to take part in a war where

age and gender before transporting them to the notorious 'Topzawa' concentration camp near Kirkuk.

Detainees were kept for days with undrinkable water and very poor quality food. The children and babies were separated from their families and were taken away never to be seen again. The babies died from lack of care and feeding. Young girls were sold into prostitution through black market deals and were sent to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Kuwait. All this happened at the time when Saddams' regime regularly gave out statements saying, "We Arabs are people of chivalry; we do not humiliate human beings, not even our enemies!"

The most severe year in the Anfal operations was 1988. Although 182,000 victims have been documented, there are tens of thousands of victims who have not been recorded: the unnamed newborn infants, the unborn children of pregnant mothers, the many people who were shot at and killed by the infantry and the air force as they escaped on foot and those who died through starvation and diseases rather than give themselves up to the tyrant' army.

It is now clear that several areas in central and southern Iraq were used for the mass executions and the mass burials of the Anfal victims. Numerous graves have been discovered since the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003 and what is distressing is the complete disregard for human dignity and social

houses. We could say that Saddam planned to wipe out the Kurds. He caused the demolition of 4,500 villages in the Kurdish region, forcing many of them into collective towns and into remote areas in the south in order to break their cultural identity. In so doing, almost all the villagers were deprived of their sources of income and living.

In the later period of the Iran-Iraq war when there were no international observers in the region, Saddam Hussein caused the bombing of several Kurdish towns with chemical weapons. In Halabja alone, more than five thousand people were killed and several thousands were badly wounded and diseased from the poisoned gas released that day, many of whom are still suffering with chronic illnesses as a result.

It is amazing to think that the Anfal genocide operations were carried out in such an open and arrogant fashion. Commanders such as Saddam's cousin, Ali Hassan Majid ('Chemical Ali') were assigned their position and duties by laws passed in the parliament of Saddam's regime. Local headquarters were established in almost every Kurdish city and had large signs on the buildings that read, 'Anfal Operations Command.' Tens of thousands of troops were ordered to attack Kurdish towns and villages, to demolish houses, to deprive the local inhabitants of every means of making a living and to detain all the inhabitants regardless of

perpetrators. In this small volume, we will discover the Anfal story through the eyes of Uzer, a direct eyewitness and victim of these events when he was in his mid-20's: a young man who survived in a miraculous way!

Abdulkarim uzeri

and religious standards in the creation of the mass graves. Graves were routinely not covered over properly allowing the bodies to be exposed to wild animals. Perhaps the greatest disdain for human values practised by the Ba'athist regime was demonstrated in their burying dogs along with the humans. This is in stark contrast with the 'Anfal-led' Kurds who were keeping the fasting month of Ramadan at the time of their execution - they fasted right up to the time of death by firing squad!

We Kurds have a duty to history to tell the world what the Anfal is all about, why it was carried out and the depths of the repugnant ways of how these genocide operations were implemented.

In translating this book from Sorani Kurdish I am deeply grateful to my friend, Arif Qurbani, who has authored this and other similar books. He himself is from the city of Kirkuk which was the main centre of Anfal genocide operations. Arif has helped me in devoting his valuable time to answer many of my questions in preparing this translation work. I am also much obliged to Dr Andrew Hyde who spared no effort in making this book acceptable to English readers.

My friend and I plan to publish a number of other books about the notorious genocide operations known by the title, 'Anfal.' We try to collect all the truth by interviewing both the victims and the

Forward by the Translator:

The genocide committed against the Iraqi Kurds by Saddam Hussein's regime in 1988 was one of the most systematic of mass killings perpetrated in the post World-War two periods.

These multiple acts of genocide came under the name *Anfal*: a name that points to the eighth Sura in the Qur'an. This Sura is composed of 75 verses and almost all of them deal with the extreme way in which you treat your enemy; how and when to use extreme action and how to forgive and take a peaceful stand when the enemy declares peace. One of the most forceful verses in this *Anfal* Sura is verse 60 which states: "Prepare whatever force you can to terrorize God's enemy and your enemy".

Running alongside this extreme teaching is *Jihad* which is already well-known to the Western media and concerned as 'Islamic Holy War.' While there is no Sura entitled or dedicated to *Jihad*, this concept is mentioned several times in different chapters. *Jihad* is understood as going to take part in a war when there is a threat against Islam or the Islamic nation, and such participation only comes in response to a call to *Jihad* from a high ranking Islamic leader such as a Mufti. Once a Muslim decides to undertake *Jihad*, he must be willing to sacrifice himself and whatever he has.

The Grand Ayatollah Khomeini was in the position of being able to declare *Jihad* during the Iran-Iraq War. However, he did not do so because of the expected consequences. Saddam Hussein called for *Jihad* of numerous occasions, but when he felt his life threatened and not Islam! For this

Introduction

The number of people who were subjected to the notorious *Anfal* campaigns was abundant. Tens of thousands of non-combatant civilians including men, women and children, were collected at gunpoint from different places of Kurdistan, the Kirkuk area in particular and were taken to the Topzawa concentration camp west of Kirkuk city. Thereafter, men aged between 15 and 70 were put into sealed transporters and taken to the firing squad fields of Ar-Ar desert west of Baghdad.

There are witnesses who saw the detaining processes. There are people who explain how dear members of their families were blind-folded and were put in those sealed cars. But only handful numbers of victims who, one way or another, could survive the firing squads. Those survivors are the only Kurds who can tell the story of the mass execution by Saddam's soldiers and the burying process by bulldozers.

Those survivors were traveling in 'the convoy of no return.' They were sprayed with bullets at the edge of the mass grave pits. They were pushed and thrown into the ditches but miraculously survived. Faraj Muhammad Aziz is one of those survivors. He was 28 years old when he was affected by the *Anfal* genocide process. Ten years after his ordeal, he moved to the United States where he could resume his peaceful life. In 2004, he paid a visit to his homeland and he was kind enough to grant me this exclusive interview. Although this interview came sixteen years after his big escape, his answers were still greatly informative. Faraj lives now in Washington and is a citizen of the United States of America.

Arif Qurbany

Saddam authorized his cousin Ali Hassan Al-Majeed (best known as the Chemical Ali) to perform genocide attacks on the Kurdish nation. Ali Hassan's troops were ordered to shoot anything that moves, level all the villages and towns of Kurdistan to the ground, burn down anything green, and dry out every water source.

Faraj and other eyewitnesses tell us how they were taken at gunpoint from their homes to the camps of mass killing in Ar-Ar desert west of Baghdad. Parents, children, brothers, sisters, lactating mothers and newborn babies were all alike, pushed into sealed vehicles, transferred to the gun-sights of firing squads!

The Anfal massacres were performed in different stages. There were eight operations in all, before the international community could stop it: 182,000 innocent victims were shot and buried in mass graves all over Iraq.

Some eyewitnesses have been interviewed; they all tell the story of the brutal nature of the nationalist regime that knew no value of the innocent people's lives, no love and no mercy whatsoever. They rather enjoyed the agony and struggle of death.

Only five eyewitnesses remain of those who were victims of the mass shootings, who heard the roar of bulldozers, other eyewitnesses escaped during other stages of the Anfal operations. Besides these, there are Arabs who were not victims but participants in committing the Anfal operations and have now told their stories voluntarily.

It is a blessing of God to survive a living hell created by Saddam Hussein: but it is by no means an easy task to gather your courage, bear your bleeding wounds, and leave a mass-grave in the dark of the night and in the heart of a desert not knowing exactly where to go!

It might have been easy to escape from the troops but never from the wild hungry animals. In addition, once the survivor

reason, he only received very weak response from the Iraqi people and next to no answer from the Pan-Arab nations.

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When the Ba'ath party came to power, the process of Arabization of Kirkuk and other Kurdish towns bordering the Arab-speaking regions of Iraq commenced and continued without ceasing. This process included the confiscation of Kurdish homes and properties, the deportation of Kurdish families, and the settlement of Arab families into these houses. We could say that Saddam planned to wipe out the Kurds. He ordered the demolition of 4,500 villages in the Kurdish region, forcing many of them into collective towns and into remote areas in the south of Iraq to break their cultural identities. In so doing, almost all these villagers were deprived of their sources of income and living.

Arif Qurbany on his interview with Faraj Muhammad Aziz

Vastly enormous was the number of people who have been massacred during the Anfal operations ordered by Saddam Hussein, the chief of the Iraqi Ba'athist regime. Huge was the number of families that suffered the heartache of the Anfal tragedies. And there have also been a very small number of victims who could run to the safety despite their wounds caused by shooting at the mass grave sites.

These survivors are now telling us what exactly happened to them. They tell the stories of the Anfal operations which were enacted according to a decree by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Al-Majeed.

Well, I will answer the questions that you ask and I will do my best to be informative.

I mean what can you remember from the days of your childhood?

The best I remember is that my family moved to live in another village known as Hassan Prcha.

When was that?

In 1956, I was just 6 years old.

Why did your family move to this new location?

Well, it was not easy for a 6-year old child to understand: but most probably, my family wanted to live in a place where the majority of people were our relatives. However, we did not stay long there either. Three years later, we wanted to avoid the dispute between the landowners and the farmers, so we left Hassan Pircha.*

How big was your family?

Quite a big one, my father had married three times, we were two brothers and six sisters; but after the death of my father, my mother married another man and so we received four more brothers.

Poverty was widespread in those days. do you remember how your living standard was?

In 1958, a military coup overthrew the Monarchy in Baghdad and a Republic was established. In a step to improve the living standard, the new rulers decided to give the lands to the farmers. That is how the troubles started between the farmers and the land owners

began his journey home, mainly along the road to Kirkuk city, he may face over ten military checkpoints.

Here, I have the honor to introduce the eyewitness: Mr. Faraj Mohammed Aziz.

Dear Faraj,

Thank you very much for attending this interview which is the first among several other interviews of survivors of the Anfal genocide operations.

With pleasure, I am willing to answer all of your questions. But please, put my circumstances into consideration.

I fully agree with you. My first question is about your full name, age and your place of birth.

Well, I am Faraj Mohammed Aziz born in 1950 in a village called Topkhana in the district of Qadr Karam, Kirkuk city.

Are you the original inhabitant of Topkhana?

Yes, my father and my grandfather are buried there.

How big was your village?

Topkhana was a small village of just twelve houses.

Have you been to school?

No, I have never been.

Can you read and write?

At present, I am learning English in the United States of America.

Faraj, I want you to go back to your memories of your childhood, your everyday life and your time in Topkhana until the notorious days of Anfal had started. However it is your choice from which date to start.

simple way using stones and mud. However, that wasn't easy either because we didn't have enough money to buy furniture.

Was that the first and the last time your village was torched, I mean before Anfal genocide operations?

Not actually, because our village was attacked and set on fire a second time in 1965.

Did they destroy other villages or you were the only unlucky people in the area?

Our village was the only one on that occasion because there had been a rumor that our village was hosting Kurdish fighters.

When did you get married? Did you have children when troops took you the Anfal concentration camp?

Yes, indeed I was married and had nine children. The first one was a girl named Nakshin and the last one was a little boy called Karwan.

Iraqi military rules state that every 18 years old boy must serve the army, did you join the army

No, never.

Why not?

I did not respond to the military service call, I was regarded as an army deserter. I lived in hiding until 1975 when an amnesty order was granted to the Kurdish deserters that benefited me to get exempted from the military service.

The Kurdish liberation movement known as (September revolution) faced a serious failure in 1975. After that the regime in Baghdad started uprooting the Kurds from their houses without even letting them take their belongings. Houses and all the furniture were given to Arab families.

Believe me, I can't remember but our life was depending on cultivating the land, producing crops and we were breeding cattle.

The year 1963* is known by the Kurds as the year of the (Ba'athist). As you were 13 years old can you remember that year?

Yes, I was old enough to remember the Ba'athist year.

What happened to your village and the people in that area at that time?

Just a few Kurdish fighters came into our area but they didn't come to our village.

In 1963, the Ba'ath party came to power for the first time Why?

Simply because it was too close to the government stronghold in Laylan. Ba'ath national guards (Harass Quaumi) were coming more often to our village. They were coming for looting and stealing. They were known to the public as bare feet Arabs who came to the Kurdish area after the bloody military coup of 1963.

In some ways this was easier because those guards were not able to chase the villagers who left their homes and took refuge in the nearby mountains. However they took away whatever they could! Once we returned back to the village, we found the houses were burned and the cattle taken away. The only two poor donkeys that were at the disposal of the village peoples had been shot dead.

Unfortunately my little deer that I had kept for a long time was stolen, I missed her very much. As you may imagine we faced a very difficult year, we had lost almost all of our belongings. A few months later, we could rebuild our houses but in a very

How long did this situation last before the destruction of your village?

It lasted three years, for three years long we suffered in this situation.

During those three years, how did you manage your everyday life? Could you go to the towns and cities around and purchase necessary things for your family?

Sometimes we could go shopping secretly, other times we had to give money to the mercenary groups who were patrolling the village roads to the towns. Some of them were doing a business; they were shopping in the name of the headquarters and reselling it to us for a higher price.

If you had been caught during the secret shopping you have just mentioned, what would have been the punishment?

They would have taken me to prison.

Was there anybody jailed just for that reason?

Yes, myself!

When?

In 1985, I loaded a tractor with fodder, on my way from Kirkuk to Qushlakh. I was stopped and taken to prison.

Who caught you?

I was caught by a mixed group of soldiers, mercenaries and secret police.

Did they take you to prison?

Yes, at once I was taken to Karama security centre in Kirkuk. I was tortured for two months and then taken to a special court for sentencing, in a show trial, for five years imprisonment. My tractor was confiscated. I spent 15 months in Abu Greb

This process continued until the start of the Iraq – Iran war in 1980. Was your village subject to this occupation?

No, our village remained untouched until 1983.

You mean that after mid 1960s destructions, the Iraqi army didn't attack your place?

From 1965 till 1980, our place was relatively safe; but from 1980 there were several air raids and artillery bombardments. In 1987, just before the destruction of our village a military curfew was announced. It meant that we couldn't leave our homes, do shopping or visit our relatives in our villages. Those who didn't obey were to be shot and killed immediately. It was real suffering!

Were you officially told that you are under curfew

Yes, indeed.

Who informed you?

We were informed by the local authorities.

Was the information given in written form?

Can you make it clearer?

What I mean is did any official person come to you and hand you and order saying that the Iraqi government will not allow anybody to wander in that area or were you informed by other means?

No, nobody came to us.

And how did you know about the details of the curfew?

My dear friend, with all these troops, mercenaries, secret police and intelligence personnel, with all these helicopters flying over your head, it was not difficult to declare the curfew. Besides, they never bothered to put things in writing.

Some moved to Kirkuk city, but for our part, we and some other families returned to our old village Topkhana, to the place where I was born. It was April 1987. There was nice spring weather then and we could quickly build some simple houses.

After demolishing your village did you find the gap narrowing and the army becoming more aggressive?

Yes, indeed we felt that.

You found going back to Topkhana and rebuilding your old house more suitable than living in a readymade house in the collective settlement, why is that?

To be honest, we were living in state of fear and confusion. The government was misleading us. It was difficult to guess what the right thing to do was. When we came back to our villages and found the destruction caused by the bombardment we became very reluctant to choose which way to go.

Were you the one who within the family circle refused to go to the collective settlement?

Well, I had been just released from prison, torture and the pain that I suffered. This meant I would rather choose to live in hell than be under the control of the Iraqi army. The other main reason was that we could look after our animals in the village, which was not possible in the collective settlement.

Did you come to a conclusion that Topkhana was an ideal place for you?

Topkhana was an isolated little village about a ten hours walk from Qushlakh. We thought that the Iraqi regime would ignore such a remote hamlet.

Could you relax in Topkhana and feel safe?

prison near Baghdad and 16 months in Mosul. I was then released by an amnesty decree and could join my family again.

When you were caught did they find any weapons, ammunition or Anti-Ba'athist publication in your tractor?

Nothing at all. They told me that it was forbidden to travel between cities and villages.

What do you think were the real reasons for detention?

The official stance was that anybody who was caught leaving the town must be taking aid to the Kurdish fighters (Peshmerga). In addition, those villagers who were travelling from the villages to the towns were suspected of performing secret anti-government work. They wanted to paralyze our nation internally.

You stayed in prison for a long time, and then you were released and went back home. On your return you found your area under Peshmerga control, could you see the difference? Was the situation improved?

Not really, I found the situation even worse. Many villages around the area were either demolished or burned down by the Iraqi troops. Many civilians were killed. Several cars were destroyed. Helicopters shot civilians and set cars on fire. The suffering of the inhabitants was unbearable. The fear of death was shared by all the villagers. A few days after my return, a military plane came and bombed our village. My wife was later seriously wounded in another round of bombing when they destroyed our houses. We were forced out of our homes without knowing where to go and without being able to take our necessary things.

There was major confusion, some relatives were asking us to go and take refuge in big cities while others were suggesting moving to collective settlements controlled by the Iraqi army.

They told us that, indeed they proved that, as they could rescue several villages from the attacks of the Iraqi forces. We have seen how they sacrificed their lives to protect the inhabitants of the village.

You told me that you have noticed that the government forces were becoming more aggressive, attacking more intensively, destroying more villages, did you think of a way to get out of reach of the army?

As I told you, we moved to our present place Topkhana to keep away from the army.

What I mean is, you were troubled even after your transfer to Topkhana, and did you think of other choices?

I was not imagining that the Ba'ath regime would attack remote hamlets that were well away from military reach: besides there were no roads leading to villages like ours. We thought the regime would have enough to demolish all those towns and villages that were already under their control.

When the Kurdish leadership put all the Peshmerga forces on alert and called them back to protect the headquarters, didn't you feel that that was the end of Peshmerga protection?

Not really, because fighting between Kurdish forces and the Baghdad regime had continued for years: there were ups and downs but an all-out war was never in sight. We always looked forward to see an end to the fighting. We didn't know that this time would be different or that the Peshmerga would be totally defeated and we would be without any protection.

You were thinking that the government's battles were only against the Kurdish commandos, so what had happened?

Yes, especially in the beginning. Topkhana was in the middle of nowhere. In our previous times there, we hadn't heard anything about military forces. Unfortunately, this sense of ease didn't last long. Every day, new villages were targeted. Bad news was knocking on our doors; we heard that there were daily destructions of poor villages around us, and that meant our turn would come sooner or later.

But who brought you the bad news?

Well, it's true that we weren't allowed to go to the cities but villagers were visiting each other. Moreover, Kurdish fighters were often coming to the area challenging the Iraqi troops, because there was no Iraqi military stronghold near the village. Therefore the Peshmerga was in a better control. They were meeting us and telling us what was happening.

So you were getting information from the Peshmerga?

Yes, to a certain extent. In the mean time, civilians were coming and going.

Did you ever ask the Peshmerga why the government forces were destroying the Kurdish towns and villages and whether they would be able to protect civilians once they came under governmental attack?

Nobody knew why the Ba'ath regime was destroying our living places.

I mean did you ask them at all?

No we didn't because we were sure that the Kurdish fighters had set their lives to protect us and they knew how barbarian the Iraqi forces were.

Did they tell you that they were able to challenge the Iraqi army?

You said that the Kurdish fighters were there to protect you and the government would only be engaged in attacking them. This means that their presence caused the military incursion into your area. So why did you tolerate them?

We were hesitant. On one hand we liked them to be there, their presence stopped the soldiers and mercenaries coming and targeting us every day, but on the other hand, we feared the resentment of the Iraqi army.

You didn't make it clear yet. What stance did you take to the Peshmerga presence? You didn't tell me exactly what you personally thought of the Peshmerga presence in your area.

As I told you, we were undecided. The Peshmerga were our people, they didn't hurt anybody. On the contrary, they stopped the daily provocations from the army. But what we feared most was an aroused the Ba'ath regime wanting to wage war on us and take the Peshmerga as excuse to justify its brutality.

How long did this situation last? When did the Anfal operation start?

Not long. When the Kurdish force failed to resist the overwhelming attacks on their headquarters, they were forced to evacuate some of their strongholds. The Quaradach district was among these evacuated areas. The inhabitants and Peshmerga of that district moved south to our area. We feared that the army had now gained a free hand to attack our area. I wish, I had been living somewhere else and not under the severe grimace of the Iraqi army. Nevertheless I soon realized that there was nowhere safe enough in Kurdistan that would allow us to enjoy a peaceful life. The mass gathering of powerless people now crowding into our area was a good signal to start the Anfal Operation.

For some years the civilians were only caught in between when there were clashes between the troops and the commandos. Often warplanes and helicopters were bombarding any vehicle which came into their sight. But these things had changed. The regime began targeting everybody; no difference between commandos on the front line and babies in their cradles!

When did you realize that the threat had become more serious?

We realized this when the Peshmerga fighters were withdrawn from our area. They moved further north and we were left behind. In the meantime, the rumors of a big military build-up were passing around. Moreover, we were listening to the revolution radio broadcasts every day. This radio was the only reliable source to learn what was happening. We had known that a joint attack of soldiers and mercenaries had started; their target was to eliminate the commandos wherever they were. We were very worried because their achieving victory over the Peshmerga meant our defeat. The battles began and the survivors were speaking about the harsh brutality of the government forces. Indeed, they were shooting at everything that moved: men, women, children, and even animals.

We were living in great fear; not much hope remained for us, and the only sense of tranquility was from the theory that the government would consider us as its citizens and would help us live peacefully after their gains of the battlefield to control the strongholds of the Peshmerga leadership.

Did it make any sense to trust the regime in Baghdad? Didn't you build false hope?

Well, we weren't deceiving ourselves, we simply couldn't help it, we didn't have much to do, and all we could do was to remain optimistic.

can only be compared to the Nazi holocaust. Indeed, to gather my stoutheartedness in order to recount all that I have witnessed, it is simply unbelievable!

We are getting closer and closer to the early stage of Anfal, meaning the operation on your village Topkhana. Can you remember the date at all?

I can't remember the exact date when the campaigns started in our area. We sent women and children to the centre of the district, to a town called Qadir Karam. They were transferred by tractors at night-time. The driver did not put his headlights on to avoid attack from the Iraqi air force.

Unfortunately, an accident happened to the tractor. It overturned upside down and most of the passengers were stuck under the wagon: two of them were seriously injured. However they had to carry on the journey to Qadir Karam. My family was put up by our relative called Haji Abdullah.

You knew what was happening to those families who were sent to the towns and cities and you also knew that the army was closing in on you. But you still sent families to the centre of troubled areas. How could that happen? How could you choose to send your children away?

You are right! What happened was that we found the troops of the Army and the mercenaries were undulating like the waves of the ocean, the sky was darkened with helicopters, shooting came from everywhere.

We were confused, we didn't know where to go, we didn't know where to take our women and children, we couldn't guess that crowded towns would turn into killing fields. We couldn't imagine the massacre that would be performed in open air. We thought that they only targeted us men. We didn't know that they have changed the menu of their appetizer!

When the inhabitants of Quaradach arrived, did you listen to their stories? Did they tell about their suffering? Wasn't that a good reason for you to think of a safer place?

I think it was too late. We were already taken between the jaws. The grip was getting harder, the rope was tightening round our necks, and our chances of survival were very slim. Yes, we were thinking of a way out. Terrifying forces surrounded the area. The more troops that came to the district, the greater the fear! Bad rumors were an additional cause of confusion. All of us had had our experiences with military: our houses were demolished. We were living without shelter and without basic necessities.

You told me that the Peshmerga spoke of the government forces using unconventional methods, exterminating human being and animals alike.

Yes, indeed they did tell us, but still we believed that only the Peshmerga headquarters were being targeted.

You want to say that you feared the army but not the extent of genocide. Am I right?

You are right, neither me nor any fellow had even thought of Anfal Genocide operations.

But how many times had your houses been destroyed?

No matter how many times, we did not reach a conclusion that something like Anfal would happen.

You told me that for simply visiting the city of Kirkuk you were jailed for many years; what more indication did you need to help you realize the nature of Saddam Hussein's regime?

The treatment in a Ba'athist prison was a piece of cake compared to the Anfal suffering. Anfal was a unique tyranny; it

Iraqi government? Who was safer the one who stayed at home or the one who surrendered to the army?

It doesn't necessarily follow for there were no measures for Anfal. The killing was happening blindly. Even those who carried weapons for the regime (whom we call Jash) were not safe either.

You mean there was no classification for who would be targeted in Anfal operations and who was not?

We didn't know who were deciding our destiny and how such decisions were taken. It was just like who was lucky and who was not.

Concerning myself, I was taken at gunpoint, became a subject for firing squad, thrown into a massive grave and came under the mercy of a heavy shovel to be buried before I die. Anyway, I am here and I think that I am a lucky man!

What did the men do after sending their families to the Qadir Karam district?

They were hiding here and there, under the bushes or in stone holes. My brother and I were among a group of twenty people, most of them were relatives and friends.

Can you remember how long you stayed hiding between the bushes and rocks? Was there a chance to wait until the end of the Anfal campaign?

On the one hand we were under the threat of death because of military attacks; on the other hand we were running out of food and water. Nevertheless, we wished to stay alive for at least one hour longer but honestly we didn't know how to survive.

The survivors of Quaradach district had explained to you what happened to their people there and in other nearby

In addition to all that, they were demolishing all the houses, and how could we leave our children so long in open air? And last but not least, the Mullah of Qadir Karam's mosque announced an amnesty ordered by Baghdad!

Who told you that that the Imam of Qadir Karam had given that advisory?

It was just like the Day of Resurrection, monitoring was not an easy task.

Who were wandering around?

They were Kurdish fighters and villagers who had given up their arms. Besides, there were Kurdish mercenaries who worked for the Iraqi regime. In general people were worried about their families and relatives; simply they didn't know what would happen to them.

How could the Kurdish mercenaries wander around with their arms in a military closed area?

I think the government was turning a blind eye to them and wanted to use them to mislead the population and to make the people believe that their families will be safe if they remain under the common control of both sides. However, that was only effective for three days.

Do you think the people were deceived by governmental propaganda?

Yes indeed, many people listened to the promises given by these mercenaries.

What happened to those who responded to the governmental call? Were they all massacred in Anfal operations? What about the appeals the Mullahs made from their mosques for citizens to surrender themselves to the

area and a primary gathering camp for the Anfal process. Victims were taken from Chamchamal to the Concentration camp of Topzhawa near the city of Kirkuk, the place to meet Saddam's Angels of death.

What happened to you and your family?

Relatives took my family to Kirkuk city, and I remained in Qadir Karam.

You met your family in Haji Hassan's house, how did you feel being apart again?

Originally, I sent the women and children to Qadir Karam to be in a safer place, but the situation reversed. The best choice was the largest city around, Kirkuk. The main issue to me and my friends was to keep our families away from the barbarian army. We didn't care much about ourselves, we preferred to die in gallantry and distance our families from the assaulters, like we were keeping our sheep far away from the wolves.

Concerning ourselves we had to find the means to stay alive and to manage the cost of living and sustenance of our families. One of our relatives, whose name was Farhad, had a solution. He was a mercenary who was acquainted with a high-ranked military officer, and he had arranged a meeting for us with that officer. But he advised us to keep away from the army. The officer couldn't do anything with rules ordered by the Ba'ath regime.

And what could you do then?

Well, we were totally disappointed. We didn't know whom to believe so we had no choice but to stay in our houses waiting for the worst to come.

places. So why did you miscalculate the duration of the campaign?

Well, the people who could leave Quaradach were safe and sound and they were gathering in our area, and there were a lot of others coming from other places. The sheer numbers of people became so massive that one had the impression that it would be impossible to massacre them all.

So how long did you stay in hiding?

Not long. One day later, some acquaintances came and told us that the government was not harming anybody and the people felt more relaxed for a while.

Did you make your mind to return? Could you trust the government?

Our acquaintances told us that a chief mercenary had promised to recruit us as his armed men. It meant that we would be part of the Iraqi army forces. We decided to go and see that man, but with maximum care so as not to be seen by any troops or to go near the front lines. It took more than three hours of walking and checking for safety before we could reach Qadir Karam. It was night time and I could pay a visit to my family.

What about the others? Where did they go?

I think everybody went to see his family or friends that night.

According to your knowledge, did the others trust the Iraqi regime or the promises given by mercenary bosses?

Qadir Karam was very much overcrowded: people from other areas came to that town hoping to find a place to survive.

What happened to these crowds?

Those who could find their ways to the cities did so, but the rest were transferred to Chamchamal, the biggest town in the

The reality was that nobody wanted to fight for the government. What they wanted was to stay alive and remain with their families far from hostilities.

Were there officers from the Iraqi army in that mercenary headquarters?

Not in the first two days.

What happened then?

We had seen troops from the Iraqi army joining the Kurdish force.

You were there without any governmental control, couldn't you have gathered in groups and ran away?

But, run to where? No safe place was remaining in Kurdistan; the best we could do was to try and save our skin.

During those two days, didn't you ask the Jash boss how he was going to help you?

The crowds of people were incredible. We couldn't reach him at all.

Had you attempted to talk with him would anyone have tried to stop you?

Honestly, we didn't think of going and talking to him, because we had no doubts about his intentions. We felt safe when we were with him. All what we hoped was keeping away from the punishment of the Iraqi army. Therefore, we didn't bother to go and ask him for anything. In addition, we had the feeling that he was doing a good job.

Didn't you fear that the whole thing might be a trick, the same trick that happened to the Kurdish fighters before you?

While you were hiding, somebody came to you and asked you to join a mercenary group which would have granted you safety. Why didn't you join them?

We considered that to be the last chance, simply because we had to be recruited as mercenaries. That would have been deeply shameful for us. In the beginning we tried other choices but unfortunately nothing had worked. So we send a man called Haji Karim to speak to one chief whose name was Sheikh Mu'tassam whose brother was the governor of Suleimanya city. Mu'tassam promised to help but under a condition that we surrendered an AK-47 rifle per person.

Did you accept that term?

Yes I did.

How did you and your friends get weapons?

As for myself, I had had a gun hidden in the village. Other villagers had also got guns and those who looked for one could get it easily.

With this gun, I joined Battalion 64 under Sheikh Mu'tassam's command who promised us to be considered as the government's gunmen and we would be exempted from detention and from the Anfal campaign.

How could you reach this Jash boss without being arrested?

Transporters from his Battalion came to fetch and take us to his headquarters near Qadir Karam.

How many people were in one car?

We were about twelve people. We thought in the beginning that there would only be a few of us and that we would be well looked after. Unfortunately, it was swarming with men like us, as if the whole number of inhabitants of the area were trying to be recruited to that small military unit.

Do you think that the chiefs who refused to accept other gunmen were aware of what was happening to the people or they just didn't want to help? Was there another possibility of calculating the nation's punishment in the future?

Sir, how can I know what was in their mind? Why don't you go and ask them personally?

My friend you are right, but they will not answer any such question.

Well I can't speak for them either.

When did you realize that you were going to be arrested?

When the army came in such massive numbers and started checking places all around. And one day a military helicopter arrived and General Bariq came out of it and was warmly received by Sheikh Mu'tassam and other high ranking officers. We knew then that something was about to happen.

They sat down and talked for more than two hours. They looked to be in trouble. We knew that they were not in harmony. We didn't know what was going on, but we all knew how ruthless that man Bariq was. After the conversation a shooting game at artificial targets started.

How many of them took part in the shooting?

Only Bariq and Mu'tassam were doing the shooting. We could guess that the tension calmed down. After a short while Bariq had left and the soldiers started questioning us: they made lists about our full names, types and registering number of the weapons that we had handed over. They asked about our professions and other matters.

Then a cameraman and showed us on television. "That is the end" I said to myself.

Where you filmed with or without weapons?

We were thinking over and over about what might happen to us. But we expected no dirty plan from Sheikh Mu'tassam.

When the official troops came and joined the Battalion 64, didn't you realize that they had come to arrest you all?

While we were among these paratroopers, we remained frightened and uncertain about our future. However many days passed and nothing out of place had happened.

According to your knowledge, did the mercenary chief ask why they were there or what their intentions were?

I knew nothing about that.

Before being arrested and taken away, had you seen other groups of gunmen joining Sheikh Mu'tassam?

Yes indeed, too many people were coming everyday, giving up their weapons and looking for safety.

Where there other mercenary heads (or *Mustashars* as they were called officially by the Iraqi government) who accepted and enlisted gunmen?

Yes, there were two kinds of Mustashars. The majority of them did ask people to join them, bring weapons and ammunition in return for their safety. But once they were in, they shown on Iraqi television and described as Iranian agents who were arrested by the Iraqi troops.

What was meant by the Iranian agents?

That was how Kurdish fighters were being named by the Iraqi government.

How about the other kind of Mustashars?

A few of them refused to recruit extra people or make money through them.

What do you mean?

What I mean is we should have tried to put the situation under our control.

Can you make it clearer?

Well, there was a time we were totally disappointed, we had no glimpses of hope. At certain times, when we had our guns in our hands and when we were in great numbers, we should have fought for our lives and we could have reduced the number of the victims, and many might have survived. However, we didn't get the momentum because of a lack of leadership.

Do you mean that you were all responsible for what had happened?

It was the regime in Baghdad who made the plan on the first hand, and the other hand the confusion had worsened the situation.

When you were put in front of TV cameras and you felt that the end is coming closer, did you talk to the mercenary chief, asking him to fulfill his promises?

The man seemed disappointed too.

Did he say so?

No, he didn't but we could read his face, he looked to be shocked by our situation.

How did you know that your situation was strange to him? How did you know that there was no deal with General Bariq?

I have no idea. But he too might have been misled by the Iraqi regime.

You mean by the Ba'ath government in Baghdad?

We were filmed without our weapons.

What was the expectation of the other people?

We felt like detainees. The whole game was a trick; our guns were being used for government propaganda.

Wasn't it possible to use your gun and run to safety?

You often speak about running to the safety but there was no safe place. Every part of Kurdistan was packed by troops, mercenaries and heavy tanks.

What I mean is there were many of you carrying weapons, so why didn't you plan to rise up against the army especially after you learnt that there was no chance to survive?

The Kurdish fighters "Peshmerga" were in bigger number and were better trained, but they couldn't do much. By no means would we have done better than them.

Besides, the Peshmerga had left their lines and given up their arms. We didn't know where to seek protection. We were simply demoralized.

Were there groups of Peshmerga surrendering to the safe Battalion as you did?

Yes indeed, many of them came and gave up their weapons.

Were they in the same position as you were, I mean they didn't know what was happening to them?

We were all confused; there was nobody to give us a good advice.

Well, suppose there was an advisor, how do you think that he could have changed the situation?

The advisor could have put a limit to what have happened.

How about the others? Did anybody ask him or knew his answer?

None of my friends had asked such questions.

How did you know that he was troubled or perhaps he hadn't been correctly informed about the next steps?

He looked very disturbed and he had tough arguments with the army officers.

Did you listen to their arguments? Where you close enough to hear what they were arguing about?

No, we couldn't hear them; there was a large distance between us and them.

So, how did you know that they were arguing and not chatting nicely to each other?

When Bariq was there it was clear that they were in agreement. We were at the same distance and noticed that they were laughing. But with other officers, things looked like quarreling and there was no laughter.

Did the argument between Mu'tassam and the army officers last long?

The dispute continued until we reached the (Mekan) crossroads. We were held there for about an hour and the argument went on a long time without ending. In the end we were taken to Chamchamal Barracks, a place of no return.

Were you still carrying your guns?

No we were disarmed at the Ali-Awa stream on the way to the Mekan crossroads.

Who disarmed you, the troops who were already with Mu'tassam?

Yes, that is what I mean.

How can you be so sure?

Because, he wasn't told to gather all these people and then handing them over to the army to face an unknown fate.

My dear Faraj, this is a sensitive issue. Maybe in the near future, greater attention will be paid to the Anfal crimes. The Kurds themselves may take the case into their own hands. They may investigate those among the Kurds who took part in this loathsome crime. No doubt, the mercenary chiefs will be questioned: Sheikh Mu'tassam will be among them. Therefore I want you to make sure what his response was when the soldiers wrote down your names and took photos of you to be shown on TV? And did you ask him what was going to happen?

Because we had been asked to join the Battalion with our guns for the purpose of paramilitary recruitment, we took these arrangements as normal procedure. Only when they took away our weapons, put us in military vehicles and transferred us to the notorious Brigade Centre at Chamchamal did we realized that the game was over.

I am asking you once more whether you asked that man about your destiny.

It was overcrowded; we had discussed the prospects over and over with each other. Nobody was aware what the real intention of the Iraqi regime was.

I didn't ask for your expectation. I want to know what Mu'tassam's answer was.

I didn't ask him anything.

Were they military vehicles?

No they were coaches known as "Japanese Coaster".

How about the drivers?

They were all civilians.

How many passengers were in one coach?

Every coach had twenty-one seats, nineteen of them were given to us, and the rest were occupied by military guards.

How many coaches were loaded?

I didn't know the number but there were too many of them. I couldn't count them.

Thus, you were taken away. What was Mu'tassam's last word?

When we were queuing up to get on the coaches he came and said, "Don't worry you will be taken to Suleimaniya." He also said that he couldn't be responsible for those who had come without weapons.

Were there men coming without guns?

Yes, there were. My brother came without a weapon.

What was Mu'tassam's response?

"Go to hell! You shouldn't come without a gun!" he told my brother.

This means that he was confident about the safety of the gunmen.

Yes he was sure. At least he was pretending so. In the end he could not work anything out; he did not have any power at all!

Well after Bariq's departure, a rush of massed soldiers happened round our area. They grew ten times as many as they had been.

Were you attacked and disarmed or it happened slowly after the questioning?

You know, when Bariq left we were checked and questioned several times. In the end, we were ordered to stand in regular lines and to pile our guns in front of us. We were not attacked but couldn't refuse either.

Who was giving orders?

Some army officers.

Where was Sheikh Mu'tassam?

He was around.

Was he watching the situation?

No, he was not. He was talking to some high ranking officers nearby. Later on, he came to us.

Did he come after the disarmament?

Yes, that is right.

Could he say anything?

Yes, he said that we will be taken to be enlisted in Suleimanya city.

Did any of you say that, "We are disarmed and going to be imprisoned"?

No, I didn't hear anybody saying so.

What had happened afterwards?

They brought vehicles and ordered us to get on.

trailers. I wish I were shot dead before seeing that shameful sight!

Here, the lie of the story of our enlistment as paratroopers was uncovered. In fact, the words of respecting women and children were nothing more than mere propaganda. Concerning ourselves, we were simply put on the death list, and yet, the worst was to come - we were to be killed without knowing anything about the fate of our families.

Were all the villagers from the same area taken to this barracks including the women and children? Were the numbers of the troops equally big?

You couldn't imagine where all those troops had been brought from. They were so many as if they were covering the entire face of the earth. So many guards were patrolling these poor families!

For how long did they keep you at Chamchamal?

They kept us there for less than an hour.

Could you make any contact with the families there?

No, they didn't let us get out of the cars.

So what was the reason of taking you and keeping you there for just an hour or so?

I didn't know, nobody said any thing but probably it was a meant to persuade Sheikh Mu'tassam.

While you were watching near the gate and looking at all these people, what was coming into your mind?

We were losing hope. We realized how defenseless we were among all the people of this world!

Did you talk to the guards in the bus?

While sitting in the bus, did you speak with the soldiers; asking them where they were taking you or why they were imprisoning you?

They were simple guards, and we didn't know yet that we were under arrest. We simply thought that we will be enlisted as paratroops in Suleimanya. And when we realized that we were misled we couldn't help it because it was too late. We were at Mekan crossroads, Mu'tassam wanted us to be taken to Suleimanya but the officers refused that, their orders were to drive us to Kirkuk; to the city of concentration camps and firing squads.

Here an argument started and lasted for about an hour. Clearly Mu'tassam was cheated when he was informed that the gunmen were going to death. That this was only for a TV show and to lead us to the concentration camps. It seemed that the Kurdish mercenary chiefs were not aware of the fate of those who had carried guns. At the last moment in Aliawa, Mu'tassam told us that he was sure about our safety. Otherwise he wouldn't come that far with us. He could have simply turned his face away, disappeared and avoided a risky opposition to the high ranked military officers. However, at Mekan he was able to change the direction to Chamchamal where the big military base was stationed. Most probably, however, the officers had told Mu'tassam: 'Never mind, we take them to Suleimanya'. Mu'tassam then left us and we didn't know where he went and we never met him again. We headed to Chamchamal. The barracks was very large and overcrowded with troops. We were ordered to line up near the gate.

Had you seen other people held in Chamchamal by these troops? Were they from your area?

Yes, the place was packed with women and children from the villages around us. And I have seen the same shocking sight of Kurdish women's underwear hanging from the bars of Tractor

Apart from soldiers, did you see any other Kurds carrying weapons in Chamchamal?

Well we remained sitting in the bus. We didn't have a chance to see who was who.

What I mean is did you see gunmen in Kurdish dress?

No, I didn't see any.

When did you leave Chamchamal brigade?

It was late in the evening.

Was it getting dark?

Yes it was, because the buses were using their headlights.

What was their direction?

We headed to the same crossroads of Mekan on the way to Kirkuk.

What were your prospects?

When you are under threat, when you are out of your mind, it is really difficult to have the right assumption or think what would exactly go to happen to you. I was only sure about one thing: that something unfair was going on.

Did the convoy stop at Mekan or headed directly into Kirkuk?

We headed to Kirkuk right away. I was saying to myself that Chamchamal was either a stop for registration or was meant to cheat Sheikh Mu'tassam.

What was the right answer?

Nobody knows.

Were you taken into Kirkuk itself?

No I didn't. Because they were not answering any questions and they didn't share our conversation. However, some other soldiers came and wrote down our names.

What was their rank?

I didn't know anything about their rank. All we knew was that they were in uniforms.

Did they ask you for your ID cards?

No, they did not. They only stood by the door and asked for our names one by one.

They wrote down the names and left without telling you anything?

Yes indeed, one of them told us that we were all going to be shot dead.

Did you take it seriously?

No I didn't. I thought it was only a psychological tactic.

What had happened after the registration of the names?

Shortly after that, they ordered the drivers to turn around and resume the journey.

Was the journey resumed with the same buses and the same drivers?

Yes indeed, nothing had changed.

Did you move with the same number of buses and same number of people or were there any newcomers?

Yes, they brought more guards and more buses loaded with unfortunate Kurds. Then we all headed out as one convoy.

defenseless people, there were guns pointed at them by aggressive soldiers. I couldn't count the number of the soldiers but I saw that the detainees had been divided to two groups. Men and women with children were separated. The shouting, screaming and crying of the children could seemingly knock the doors of heaven but not the consciences of Saddam's generals!

Did you remain within your own group or were you mixed in with others in the crowd?

We were mixed with other groups but only groups of men.

Where did the others come from?

They were brought from everywhere: from different towns and villages of Kurdistan.

Were there people left there for a long time or were they transferred right away?

Indeed, we asked them the same question. They told us that they had been brought in one day before, while some others had been there for four days.

Did you meet some of your old friends there?

Yes, there were about 30 friends and people with whom I had been acquainted with before.

How long did you wait in the yard?

We remained there for only a short time. Somehow we were lucky to be moved to the halls. While others complained of being left outside for days. They were left under the heat of sun at daytime and left without cover during the chilly nights.

How was the registration process? Could you chose a place to present yourself or you had to wait for somebody to come and to do the job?

No, they took us to Topzawa camp. Ugh Topzawa.

At what time did you arrive in that notorious camp?

It was dark when we arrived.

About what time was it?

About 9 o'clock in the evening.

The distance between Chamchamal and Topzawa is fairly short. Why were you so late then?

The military convoy moved very slowly.

Did you find other people in Topzawa?

It was packed in such a way that I thought the whole world was there!

Where were they brought from?

They were all unlucky villagers like us.

Were they all men, young men or mixed with elderly people, women and children?

Yes, there was a mixture including newborn babies and those over 100 years old.

How did they take people into the camp: in the buses or not?

The camp was built on a very wide area. Once we crossed through the boundary fence, we were ordered to get out of the buses. On the ground, there were hundreds of soldiers who came to surround us. They were very cruel. They shoved us as if we were animals.

We heard that Topzawa was a very large military training center. There were many halls inside it; these halls were built like stables or barns. The yard was packed with thousands of

Were there many of such halls?

Yes there were very many of them. But what is important here is that all these big halls were not enough for the crowd. Because ninety percent of the people had to remain in the open air.

When you were forced in were there others already in the same hall?

Yes, there were a number of children and elderly men, but they were taken out.

Do you know where they took them?

No I don't know.

Did they put them into buses, leave them in the yard, or take them to another hall?

I think they were taken to a hall where women, children and elderly men were being kept together.

Did the officers and soldiers talk to you in the hall?

Talking about what?

Talking about anything.

They weren't talking to us. They were only shouting and insulting us. There was nothing that you could call conversation.

Were they swearing only at men or at the families as well?

What do you expect from such primitive troops? They were swearing at anybody. They even insulted the sacrosanct: they mentioned Jalal Talabany.

What about Jalal Talabany?

Soldiers came and ordered us to queue up in several lines and to go toward the registration points.

What did they ask for?

They wanted to know everything about us: names, surnames, the number of our family members and they even asked for the names of our friends and our neighbours. They wanted to know the whereabouts of our other relatives.

What happened after the questioning?

According to the registration lists, we were then divided into large groups and taken to the halls accordingly. It seemed that each hall was packed with over 500 people.

Were they all men in the halls?

Yes we were all men, but in other halls there were mixed groups of women, children and elderly people.

Have you been classified during the registration?

Yes indeed. The young people were taken shoulder to shoulder by two soldiers, and they were put into a special hall. What I like to remember, here is a case of a man named Gafur Tofiq who argued with the soldiers saying that he was too old to be classified with the youth, but nobody listened to him.

Did you know that the youth will get the worst fate?

Different people had different expectations. Some thought that only the young people will be killed, some others said that every male person will be exterminated. Probably, Gafur knew that he would never survive with the young group.

How big was the hall?

Incredibly big, I could hardly see the other end of it.

Have you seen people who were put into cars and taken outside of Topzawa camp?

Anybody who entered the camp could see immediately what was going on; pushing new people in and taking others away out to nowhere.

How often did this process of driving people out of the camp occur?

Very often, I can assure you that during my two day stay there over fifty groups were taken away and were replaced quickly by newcomers.

How was the departure going on? Were there people lined up according to the list of their names or were they just forced into the transport?

As you know the names and details of the detainees were registered several times. The last one was in Topzawa and it was considered for taking groups to the journey of no return. As soon as a group was taken away, other new groups were prepared. This operation seemed to be endless.

How could the army register the names and details of this mass of people that you described?

The registrations were taking place in several places; there were about a hundred clerks who were doing the job.

What kinds of people were forced to be taken away?

What kind? Just unlucky people like me.

What I mean is did you see vehicles packed with children, women and elderly people?

They were forcing everybody in.

Were they taken together or separately?

Well, they said, "Where is he? Why doesn't he come to rescue you?"

What was your response?

Who dared to open his mouth? We did not respond at all. Should we have opened our mouths, they would have silenced us with bullets.

Can you tell me about the time that you have spent in Topzawa? Where you given anything to eat or to drink?

As I told you, we were taken into a hall at night, that night and the day before we were not given anything to eat or drink. We were thirsty, hungry and exhausted. It was only the second day's evening when they brought us a kind of soup that could be considered as the worst in the world; it was too little, too bad and too late. Some preferred to go without it; others couldn't have more than a sip.

What about those who were kept in the yard, did they get a better portion of food?

I don't know who got what and who did not, there were masses of people and in the mean time, there were convoys of coaches taking and bringing other people. It was not easy to know what was happening outside. Our place itself was overcrowded; nobody could care about the others.

Where were you positioned in the hall?

What do you mean?

What I mean is, were you near a window or a door, so you could look through?

Each hall contained over fifty windows, they were high up, and it meant that we couldn't see outside easily.

Yes, but not on a regular basis. Sometimes they were covering the eyes of the victims, while other times they were just pushing them into the coaches.

Was this process related to the gender or the ages of the prisoners?

No, only the young people were covered. However, some youth were taken without tying their arms.

What was your explanation for that?

We were praying to God to be taken without being blindfolded. We actually thought that only blindfolded prisoners were going to be shot.

As long as you were kept in Topzawa concentration camp, could you have an access to the water closet?

Yes, there were some lavatories built beside each other. The time was fixed by the guards. They were ordering the people to queue up and go to the rest rooms. Their treatment was very inhumane, pushing us and hitting us with their guns without any reason. Some didn't have a chance to reach the toilet at the right time.

In the beginning, you told me that you were with your brothers in Aliawa, what happened to them? How long did you stay together?

We spent the first night together in Topzawa. But when they made the lists of the names, we were separated. I was within the first list to be taken away.

Why you and not your brother?

I didn't know why. It was 12 o'clock of the second night when troops in green uniforms burst into our hall. They read some

No, it was only in the beginning when they brought people from villages and towns together. There in Topzawa, the classification started. Women and children in one place, young girls in a different one, old men and women together and young men like ourselves were classified differently.

Have you seen different categories in different places?

Yes I have.

Which types of transports were used to take those people away from the camp?

They looked like ambulances. They were colored either in green or in white but none of them had any windows.

How many vehicles were traveling in one convoy?

Twenty to twenty-five vehicles were loaded up each time.

Was the loading taking place in the hall or in the yard?

In both of them. I have seen buses in front of the halls, while others were stopping near the lines of the people who were being prepared for the mass graves.

Were people getting on the cars with resistance or without it?

We were powerless people, we were starving, and we were exhausted and terrified. We couldn't say a word of dissent. Besides, the soldiers were barbarian; they dealt with those poor people with the highest degree of lowness, malice and cruelty. I think that the mentality of those troops was such that they considered wicked acts against defenseless people as a kind of chivalrous conduct.

Were they blindfolding people's eyes and binding their arms before forcing them into the vehicles?

Where were they bringing all these people from? Were they newcomers?

No, they were not new. They were within the same groups. But they were mixed and separated according to their firing-squad plan.

What was the final number of victims in the last hall?

Presumably about seven hundred people packed in a hall that could take about five hundred people. I could guess that from the size of the crowd.

Could the prisoners have a seat or a place to rest in a hall with five hundred people?

It is difficult to answer. In the old one with five hundred occupants, some could sit down on the floor or squat. But in the new one; one could only get a place to stand on his feet.

Was the last hall a bit smaller than the others?

No, they were exactly of the same size.

Could you talk to the others? Were the groups kept as they were before or were they allowed to mix? What was common between you and them? What was the expectation of those unlucky people?

In the beginning I thought that the reason of moving us into a new hall was to let us have some night rest. But when the numbers grew, I realized that the end of our life was near. We spent a horrible night, we were restless and we were worried about the unknown fate. There was a question mark on everybody's face: why were they punishing us so cruelly? Why were there no organizations to defend us?

However the gloominess of a cool black night came to an end, the sun appeared in the horizon, it looked shy and pale. I could

names (mine was included) and we were ordered out to the yard. But my brothers with some other people remained inside.

When they called your names, did they tell you anything else?

“Go and wait outside.” That was all what they said.

How about your cousin?

He was in the same list as mine.

How did that happen, as you were all together when reaching Topzawa camp?

That is right, we were all registered together. But the huge crowd of the people in the camp made the difference.

Were you lining up with your cousin during the last registration?

Yes, we were together.

What was his full name?

Salih Ahmed Amen.

How many people were ordered out from the hall?

We were around one hundred.

Did they leave you in the yard to get mixed with the others?

No we were taken into another hall.

Was it empty?

It was half empty. But it soon became overcrowded. no place remained to seat or to lie down. Nobody could rest because there was no place to put your head.

How many people were packed into that car?

I couldn't count them, because the seats were not in a regular pattern, two seats were backing each other. It means that I could not see all the passengers but the number might have been between fifty and sixty.

Was there anybody who recognized the type of car?

Indeed, we talked a lot about it, but nobody had any idea about it. It must have been imported for such special purposes.

Have you seen the plate number?

No, I did not see it and I was not concerned about it.

At what time did you get on the bus?

It was 10:30 in the morning.

But you said that you were taken out of the hall about 9:30.

What had happened during that extra hour?

Well, the buses were ready but the routine of calling each person's name took an hour or so. At 10:30, I was inside the bus.

Were there still people waiting inside the hall?

Yes, there were people inside the hall and empty buses were waiting for them.

Were there windows on the bus?

What windows are you talking about? There wasn't even a hole to get some fresh air.

This means that when you were taken to the bus, you were isolated from the outside world.

Yes indeed, we were isolated. We didn't know in which direction the vehicle was moving. Firstly, because there were no

see no good omens at all. For the first time in my life, the sunshine meant nothing to me.

What had happened in the morning?

At nine twenty a large number of coaches stopped in front of our hall. They opened the gate and called our names and ordered us to go into the cars.

How many cars were waiting for you?

They must be around twenty.

What was the type of the cars?

They were the same type that I have mentioned before.

But what type?

All I know, they looked like ambulances. They were specially designed, we hadn't seen them before.

When the soldiers ordered you to get into the vehicles, did they mention the name of the car?

No, they did not.

What was the color?

They were mostly painted in green.

What was the color of your bus?

It was green.

Was it numbered?

I didn't notice that.

Could you recognize other people taken on the same bus?

Yes, my cousin and a young man called Adib Sheikh Hakim Talabany. He was from Binargul village.

I realized that our vehicle could only start when the one in front of it started moving.

Before forcing you out of the concentration camp, had you been given anything to eat or drink?

Something to eat or something to drink was like a dream that never came true.

When they put you in a windowless vehicle and isolated you and your people from the world, what did you expect would happen to you or where they were taking you to?

My first expectation started in Chamchamal military headquarter, that is when I saw how shamelessly they mistreated our women and when I saw the outrageous behavior of the Iraqi soldiers who were supposed to defend us and our land - not degrading our people. Practically, we were sentenced to death. It is the decision of the nature that people like to stay alive. As for my part, I wanted to live as long as possible. I knew how barbarous Saddam's regime was. I knew that they were not concerned about our lives. However, one must never lose hope.

Topzawa was another bitter experience that we faced a few hours after Chamchamal. Whenever I looked at those families, I remembered my wife, sisters and children.

Two days later, we were put into isolated vans which really looked like our coffins. And later on, at the pit of the mass grave, when we were blindfolded and exposed to the raining bullets, I was still dreaming to live longer, long enough to meet my children and spend my last days of my lives with them.

Were the detainees chatting to each other in the van? Did you speak with your cousin?

Yes, we were talking to each other.

windows and secondly, because the seats were not in a straight pattern.

Were you blindfolded and handcuffed in the bus?

No, but before taking us off from the vehicle near the pit of the mass graves, they blindfolded and handcuffed us.

How long did you wait in the vehicle before starting on the journey of 'no return'?

About thirty minutes.

Was the road paved?

Yes, the first thirty minutes drive from Topzawa was paved. After that, we felt dust coming in and the vehicle was swinging around.

Was the driver a civilian or a military man?

I didn't have chance to see him. When we were taken to the bus, we were within a great number of soldiers, and when I sat down, I couldn't see the driver at all. He was well protected in an isolated cabin with an armed guard.

Could anybody talk to the guard?

No, because we only passed by him when getting on and off the bus. Otherwise, he was sitting in a seat in the cabin with his gun pointed at us.

When your car started the journey, did you feel that you were travelling with other vehicles?

To be honest, when we got in that damn bus, we were just like blind people; we couldn't see the outside world. However, we were within a convoy of vehicles.

How did you know?

would put our families into the dilemma of trying to find us or lose hope.

Can you describe the way you were spending your last moments in the vehicles of death?

Being packed in that terrible car without ventilation or knowing what was happening outside was a mental and a physical torture. It was hot like a hell, we were sweating all over. We were thirsty, and hungry and short of breath, plus the fact that we were taken to the firing squad. Had I been asked what my last demand was, I would have asked for a drop of water. The main question was where were the human rights organizations?

Did you know where the other people came from?

They were mostly from Sangaw, Zangana and Qadir Karam.

The towns that you have mentioned are all belong to Kirkuk city, isn't that right?

Yes, sir you are right

Were the others in the van of similar age to you? Had you been classified according to your age in Topzawa?

Despite that classification, the group included fifteen old years old boys and fifty years old men. There was a group of very young boys who were always together; probably they were from the same family. There was also an elderly man who cried a lot and blamed himself for giving himself up to these wild soldiers. I also remember a man who all the way long asked for a sip of water but he had never got it. Last but not least who can forget the sight of the man who took off one of his shoes and used it to drink his own urine? Now tell me isn't that a deadly torture?

It seems that you have told them that there was no way out. Isn't that right?

Yes, that is right. I told them the fact that we would all be shot dead.

And what did they say?

They said that I was a coward.

After being treated in that inhumane way, after becoming sure that you will be all slaughtered, what thoughts were coming your mind?

I felt that I had passed the stage of fear. I had begun to think about the fate of all these innocent people. Why were they doing all this to us? Let us assume that we were criminals, then, where were the trial and the lawyers? Where was the justice of our Islamic Shari'at Law? Let us suppose that we, men, women, youth and elderly people were all criminals, how about all those children and babies? There among the crowd, I have seen newborn babies. We heard the stories of women giving birth to their babies onboard the military vehicles! Were these babies born as criminals? These questions and tens of others were jumping to my mind; I was thinking to find a way to understand Saddam Husein's mentality.

Were there others who gave up hope, and realized that they would be slaughtered?

There were many different expectations among us. Some thought that we were being taken to the capital and that we would be freed under an amnesty from the Iraqi government and then we would be recruited as soldiers and go back into uniform. Some others thought that we would be used as a work-force. Others cried for their ill fate saying that they would be killed and their corpses would be left to the predators and they

Before reaching the fields of firing squads did anything happen to make you feel that the journey was the last one or that death was inevitable?

In our last ten minutes, we started hearing the sounds of shooting. At first we thought the noise from the jolts by the vehicle, but the closer we came, the clearer was the sound of machine guns. All the bullets were penetrating the flesh and bone of these poor people.

This means that there were vans traveling ahead of you, that they were emptied and the passengers were exposed to shooting?

No, the shooting was from a previous convoy. Our convoy was still on the road and passing by this killing field. Simply said, there were many buses that have arrived before us. Saddam's men wasted no time to start their business.

For how long did your bus drive through that shooting field?

For about fifteen minutes.

Does this mean that the field of the firing squad was so big that it took fifteen minutes driving to reach the other end?

I am not sure whether we had reached the other end of the mass graves, but for sure it was a very big area and it seemed that shooting was taking place everywhere. The number of young Kurds shot dead was incredibly high and I saw that with my own eyes when I was thrown into the same mass grave.

Can you remember the moment when you were forced out of the car and prepared to be shot?

Yes, I can remember that moment very well, I won't forget it for as long as I am alive.

Did the van stop anywhere or go into another military camp?

I don't know much about that because we were locked in a sealed van: we didn't know which way it took. All I know is that we were once by a petrol station.

How long did the journey take from the concentration camp to the place of the mass graves?

All I know is that we were taken late in the morning and we arrived at the site of the mass graves when the sun was setting.

Were the drivers driving fast?

Yes, they drove very fast, and I think they wanted to harm us as much as possible, because most of the roads were not paved. The van became very dusty and this added to our breathing problems. Besides, the bad roads made the car jolt and jerk a lot.

How long was the unpaved road?

I can not tell you how long it was. That makes no difference because all the roads led to the mass graves, so the length of the road was not the most important issue.

Was the last part of the journey unpaved - before reaching the shooting area?

We could not see the outside world. How can one see whether the road was paved, poorly paved or not paved at all?

That is right but somehow you could feel the jolts of the van while it was being driven over a rough road.

Yes that is right, we felt that the last part of the road wasn't smooth or leveled. Our heads were butting against the wall or hitting each others. Many felt sick. It was the most difficult part of the journey. But honestly I can't remember how long it was.

then the door between the driver's cabin and our place was opened, two soldiers came in and they took the first two victims. From the opening of the door, blindfolding and handcuffing them, using the victims' belts and head scarves, hurling them on the ground with their faces fixed in the sand, and then they showered them with their machine guns.

When the door near the driver was opened, what did you see first?

I saw the two soldiers.

Were they in uniforms?

Yes, they were in green uniforms.

Were they carrying ranks?

No, they were not.

What was the type of their guns?

They were carrying AK-47 rifles.

Which type?

What do you mean by 'which type'?

Were they of 75-, 40- or 30-bullet type?

They were the 30-bullet rifles but the rifle was made of plastic, not steel.

How was the demeanor of the soldiers?

For sure, they didn't look like angels! At least, in my eyes, they looked like savage animals. They were rude, they knew no mercy. They were simply ugly killers.

How many victims were taken to the shooting field before you?

Sir, I am awfully sorry, no doubt I remind you of the most painful tragedy of your life. But such details must be carefully registered. That is why I ask you to try to remember the full story.

What I have seen and experienced is not easy to narrate. Believe me, I only told the story my wife and my children nine years after the Anfal operations 1988. I only told them when I felt safe and protected in the US embassy in Ankara. In the meantime, I don't like people to see this tragedy through my eyes.

My dear Faraj, at the beginning, I explained to you how important this interview is. We all know what a painful experience you have had and it is equally painful to remind of you this tragic story. However your story is a part of our history, it must be documented and recorded. Thanks God, some of the victims like you are still alive, so we can narrate what has happened to our nation during the Anfal genocide. So will you be so kind to tell me what had happened when you reached the mass grave?

As I told you, the sound of shooting was coming from everywhere. It seemed that a huge area had been assigned to slaughter the Kurds. Vehicles were parked all around, and the thunder of the bullets and the headlights of the cars were both orchestrating the death melody. The area was so quiet as if the whole world had endorsed the genocide of the Kurdish people. Those who were taken out of the cars and those who remained inside waiting for their turn were all quiet. I thought that the words had been killed before us. There was bloodshed outside; there was an ocean of blood in the Arabia desert, naturally, oceans are known to be quiet places and we were quiet too, spending our last moments in calmness and serenity. We all knew that we were going to die, and we couldn't find words for a farewell. This quietness only lasted for about five minutes,

It took some time because they were searching every piece of their clothes, and if they failed to find anything they would search again to make sure that nothing expensive was being left in their clothes. Then the blindfolding and the hand tying started, only then were the victims pushed away roughly five metres from the bus - which was the real distance between our bus and the pit.

The soldiers were asking the victims to say the Islamic creed. The soldiers themselves were making humming noises and then started to shoot the victims who had been forced to lie face down. The killers waited for a short while and then they threw the bodies into the pit before coming back to take another two. I think they were deliberately prolonging the killing process! What I would like to mention here is that the pit was roughly two metres deep dug by mechanical diggers.

If I may be permitted to ask you concerning the most painful thing you saw in that process?

The most painful thing was the shooting two very young men who were very polite, very elegant and very friendly. No matter how cruel a person could be, it would still be difficult to terminate their lives. When eight victims had been killed, it was their turn, and they were sitting right in front of us. Here I asked my cousin to take their turn and to be killed ahead of them. Somehow I didn't want to witness their death. In the meantime I begged the Compassionate God to rescue them. My cousin Salih agreed with me and we took their turn. I had a chance to look at them as I passed them by, for my good cheer I found a big smile on their face!

Were the people in the van left without guards while the killers were doing their business?

No, there were two other soldiers standing near the driver with their guns pointed at us.

Eight others were taken.

Those who were taken outside for the executions, were they put in the queue?

It is difficult to remember every detail; it looked like the Doomsday. The shooting was deafening, buses were coming one after one, the pit was too big. The army that did the job was a large number too. But the biggest feature of all was the number of innocent civilians who were prepared to be killed or buried alive. Therefore, queuing up the victims was not the main concern.

I agree with you. Did they take all the victims in pair?

Yes they did. They tied the hands of two people together and took them down at gunpoint and shot both of them together. Then they threw them into the mass grave and, of course, the shovel was waiting for them.

How long did the process of taking down the victims, binding their hands and shooting them last?

The shooting was taking place very quickly. Indeed ten soldiers carrying machine guns can shoot hundreds of people within minutes. Nevertheless, they did it slowly as they probably wanted us to suffer more. The pain of shooting whether it is done quickly or slowly is the same, but the real suffering was found in watching all these people be slaughtered for no reason. Each minute passing before my turn was like a ten years long of suffering from an incurable disease. To me every blink meant a death of a dear person and every wink was an agony of losing an innocent citizen.

But you didn't answer my question. How long did it take for the soldiers to come back and take another pair of victims?

What was the last thing that you looked at?

It was the headlights of a mechanical digger that struck my eyes.

Did they take your ID and your belongings when they bound your eyes?

Yes, they started searching our pockets. As for my part, they took my Iraqi nationality certificate and my money which was a relatively big amount. However, they could not reach my other money which I had sewn into my underclothes.

How was your psychological state after they had taken your ID-card and made you ready for the slaughter?

I was doing my prayers, asking God to grant me a chance to survive. I decided to sacrifice a calf soon I get back home. However, in that short moment, thousands of images came back to my mind, I saw my home, my family, brothers and sisters, my relatives and friends. I remembered the place where I was first taken captive, the Ali Awa river, Chamchamal headquarter, Topzawa camp and the two young boys whom I had just left. All these scenes returned to my mind during those last moments before the shooting.

Then I heard one of the soldiers ordering us to sit down, and then they gave us a push to stretch down. Then we had to say the Islamic Shahadat and they too said something in Arabic that I did not understand. They probably repeated some of Saddam's words, the words that licensed the killing of innocent people.

How did they lie you down on the ground?

They ordered to sit down, and then they toppled us with our faces on the ground as if they wanted us to crawl. They could topple us very easily because we were very weak and our hands were tied. As for myself I expected the bullets to hit the back of my head and come out through my forehead.

How did you feel when you volunteered to die before those two young boys?

In the beginning, I felt like I was sacrificing my life to save theirs. But what I did not want to see happened in front of my eyes.

Who was first to get off the car, your cousin Salih or yourself?

I was the first one.

What was the first thing you noticed when you were taken off the bus?

Although I was stepping toward my life's end, I took a deep breath of fresh air. I was out of the hell for just one or two minutes. It was a nice feeling to leave the darkness of that mobile prison.

But what I saw before my eyes were blindfolded was a large number of diggers in action, then the deep and long pits and too many troops killing their brothers for no reason.

Can you be sure what the time was before you were blindfolded?

Yes, the sun was setting.

Can you remember the week day?

Not really.

Can you remember the date?

Not exactly, but I was three days and two nights in captivity.

Did you look into the eyes of the soldiers who wanted to shoot you? What was the expression on his face?

No, I didn't because they blindfolded my eyes from behind.

before. This meant that I was alive. I started thinking about how I could survive and take off the blindfold and undo my hands. I wanted to do that before the arrival of the digger machine.

The fear was overpowering: I wanted to remain motionless until the driver of the bulldozer had finished. But I realised that that wasn't practical because it would have been difficult for me to remove the corpses and the mass of soil over my body. I knew that the pit was deep and the coverage would be thick and heavy.

However I worked on my hands and I undo the ties on my hands. I remained five minutes without daring to open my eyes. It was getting dark, darker inside the pit. Nevertheless, I could see more bodies being thrown into the pit. I could see the two nice young boys were among them. Until now, I remember their agony; I loved them as I love my brothers. I wanted to die before seeing their end, but that did not happen!

I could see a bulldozer working its way along the edge of the trench; its headlights were lighting the ditch where hundreds of bodies were piled together. Some soldiers were looking at the bodies. They were shooting anybody who was still moving or wailing. They came closer to me. I feared death more than at any time and I prayed that God would help me. I made myself a motionless, breathless body. I wanted no more bullets. "How can I escape the mountains of soil?" I asked myself as the bulldozers were approaching.

Thanks to God, the soldiers passed by and they hadn't noticed that I was alive. To them, it was the business as usual: all the victims were dead. One more thing that I remember is that when the soldiers stepped on the dead bodies, I could hear the cracking of bones under their heavy boots. More blood flowed out from under their bloody feet; they turned the pit into a moat of blood!

Eventually darkness came. For the first time in my life, I loved the darkness of night. The darkness that could defeat the dark

Were there officers nearby ordering the soldiers to start the shooting?

There were many troops around but I did not hear anybody give commands. I only heard the worst; the shooting.

You mean the shooting that aimed victims near your place?

No, I meant the shooting that targeted us, my cousin and

Will you please tell me about the last moments of the shooting? Please forgive me as I know how painful this must be to you!

Well although I was blindfolded, I knew that the bullets were hitting the soil round my head and shoulder and caused the dust and mud to rise. I heard my dear cousin Salih wailing, he was struggling between life and death. I felt his blood and pieces of his flesh spreading on my body. He received many bullets he started crawling from pain and sliding over my back. His blood began to run over me. I found myself sinking in a warm pool. I thought that the blood was flowing from both of us. The shooting stopped, I was between life and death.

Once more I heard the firing squad, wailing of struggling people and the sound of Islamic Shahadat. I realized that I was still alive and what had happened was only a temporary unconsciousness.

I was motionless as if I was nailed in a coffin, I was searching for my soul to know if I was alive or just dreaming for that reason I wanted to make some movement but the soldiers were faster than me they pulled both of us toward the pit and threw us deep into the mass grave. We fell on a pile of freshly massacred people. There blood was still flowing but many of them were still alive and begging for help from the sky.

I felt that my senses were recovering and I realized that the dead body next to me was my dear cousin. Again I heard the shooting of Saddam's men and the roaring of diggers more clearly than

I felt that I was starving and searched to find something to eat. As it was the harvest season, I found and ate some barley and then luckily found a stream of water to break my thirst. I sat down beside the water to make the best use of it. I cleaned myself, my clothes and removed the blood stains. In an attempt to dry my wet clothes, I sat in the sun and wanted to relax for a short while. All of sudden, an old man appeared and came towards me. I feared that he might be an agent of the government. When he came closer, I realized that he was too old to harm me. I didn't need to hide or to run away.

He made a friendly approach, greeted me and started to chat. He turned out to be a Kurdish man like myself. I was very contented to meet him; I regarded him as an angel from God. The man worked as a shepherd. He started to ask me different questions: "What has happened to you? What is all this blood doing on your clothes? Why are you bare-footed?" There was a passion in his intonation. I had already prepared my answer: I told him that I was a driver of a public work office and my vehicle had had an accident in which some of the workers had died. I told him that I was not familiar with that region.

So the old man became friendlier with me and started telling me his own story. He was a Kurd from Iran, and their region had been occupied by the Iraqi army during the Iran-Iraq war. They brought him to Iraq and forced him to work as a collective laborer. My friend was living in a refugee camp near the city of Rumady. He told me how to get to the camp and how to find his friend who worked as a taxi driver taking passengers from the camp to the city. He told me that he could bring me to the bus terminal for buses to Baghdad.

I headed towards the camp of the old man when suddenly I heard a soldier shouting at me and telling me not to come any closer to their military position. I think that was the best piece of military advice that I have ever received in my life! Thank God, they didn't have any information about person like me.

power of Saddam's war machines. The soldiers had left. It was time to make the greatest move in my life. I could either go on my knees or crawl on the dead bodies. The distance between me and the end of the pit was about four metres. Fortunately, it wasn't high - I think it was the way that the bulldozer had come out from the pit. I chose the right way out without looking at what was going on or caring about the amount of blood covering my body! I reached the outside of the pit only to find myself falling into another mass grave. Thus, I had to make my way through several pits. In time, I could crawl faster and faster. When I had a chance to look back, I couldn't see any troops or vehicles behind me. This meant that they had finished their business and were preparing for another batch. However, I felt safe. The place around me looked like a big valley, although it was dark, I continued my journey towards safety. I took a short rest after each hour of crawling.

I felt pain in my legs. I realized that my feet were bare. I remembered that I had taken off my shoes to avoid the extreme heat on the bus. Well, leg pain was easy to endure. I gathered my courage and continued the journey, the journey to nowhere. It was a journey in an empty desert and in the darkness of night. I could see inhabited places but I feared people. And the question was: Where was I to go when covered with all that blood?

All of sudden, I was attacked by some wild dogs. I tried to find something to defend myself with but failed to find anything. The dogs were as aggressive as Saddam's gang. The only way I could stop them was to stand on four feet, bark at them and attack them the same way they did. The dogs left and I resumed my journey.

I had to avoid car head lights. Whenever a car came towards me, I had to change my direction. Then dawn came and put an end to the night and the nightmare. The whole world was mine. It didn't seem to matter where I should go.

could safely travel to Rumady. He wanted to give me some money but I did not need it. I was still in possession of my old money. In the right place, I would be able to stop the right bus. One thing I was not sure about was the identity of the passengers. However I decided that I had to take a chance to make my way back home. All I had to do was to keep calm and collected. I went to board the bus which was much better than the last one that had brought me to the verge of hell! Here I remembered the tragic story of my cousin Salih and the two young men who had died the day before. With two difficult steps I reached the door of the bus to find someone keeping the door open for me: probably as he had thought that I was not able to get in easily. I greeted the passengers, one of them answered and said, "Faraj come here."

Was he the only passenger who knew who you were?

Yes he was the only one, the one who asked me to sit in a seat next to him.

How was your reaction?

I was terrified! I thought that somebody or even a corpse had followed me from the mass grave! But that shock changed to relief when he introduced himself and I realized that he had also been through the same as I had.

Did you recognize the person who called your name and asked you to sit next to him?

Not in the beginning. I only recognized him when I had a closer look at his face. His name was Uzer; he was from Laylan, detained by the Iraqi army, sent to the hell of Anfal firing squad. Luckily, in some way or another, he had survived.

What did you talk about when you sat together?

Once more I enjoyed great relief, could stay alive and carried on going toward my liberty.

It was a midday when I arrived at the camp. I met some young men who were manufacturing building bricks on the outskirts of the town. I greeted them in Kurdish and found them very friendly. I decided to stay with them for a while. Later, I went on to look for the driver's home. I found it easily. I knocked at the door and a woman opened it for me. She invited me in despite her husband being away somewhere else in the camp. I told her my full story about the car accident and how I had been lost in the desert, and that I hadn't had anything to eat or drink. My story must have been so appalling to her that she quickly disappeared to prepare some food and drink for me.

Half an hour later, her husband came back. He was shocked to find a strange man in his house. However after I had told him the same story he calmed down and was ready to help me. I asked him to be so kind to take me to a place where I could find my way back to my Kurdish homeland. His answer was that he was willing to help but he was limited in what he could offer as he was only permitted to use his taxi once a day for short periods in line with the special permission from the local authority. The man described his life as like a prisoner in this compulsory camp.

When I got ready to leave his house, he noticed that I was bare-footed. He felt pity for me and wanted to help, but I asked him not to worry as I was going to buy a new pair in the market. He insisted that I accept a pair of sandals.

He was moved by my situation and wanted to come with me to the town and explained that it was risky to walk in the town because it was strictly controlled by Saddam Hussein's troops. He came with me and showed a safer side-road, and then he asked me to get into a vehicle outside the camp as he was not sure that I could pass through the checkpoint. I believed that the driver knew my real story and so showed me a place where I

No, I had never been there before. But Uzer's sister was living there. We wanted to stay at her house and then try to find a safe way home.

When did you know that Uzer's sister was living there?

Uzer told me while we were on the bus. In the beginning, I thought that Uzer was just trying to create the impressions that were not strangers to the area. But he actually meant it: his sister was married to a man called Haji Hassan.

How good was it to have a reliable host in a very hostile place?

To me, that meant survival. Especially, when the place belonged to Uzer's sister. It meant that we could sit in a safe place and work to find a way out. But by bad luck, we couldn't find her place; we searched but found no trace. We had to avoid asking people about a Kurdish family, especially when we were going around in Kurdish clothes. Actually, because the Ministry of Public Works used many poor Kurdish workers, the Kurdish clothes were not totally unusual. Many Kurds had worked as drivers and laborers, so people were used to see them with their families. However, our main concerns were the security men and military police. A simple question of "Where is your ID" might have led us to prison again!

While you and Uzer were sitting in the bus, you didn't talk much to each other because you did not want to give any impression about what had happened. But when you got off the bus, did you ask Uzer how he escaped?

Yes, we both asked each other the same question.

How was his story?

Uzer's story was different from mine. He was taken by a different van from Topzawa concentration camp, but probably

Well, he asked me what I was doing there. I gave him a very short answer: "the same as you." He understood that talking about such details was not to our advantage. We did not talk about what had happened to us at all.

What was the destination of the bus? Did you take it by chance without knowing where it goes or where you sure that it was going to the place that you wanted to reach?

This is a good question, indeed it was not important where to go. All we wanted was to run away from Saddam's slaughterhouse. Nevertheless, we were directed how to find the way to the city of Rumady.

Did you fear the populated places?

Yes indeed, but we had no other choice. All the means of transport were going from and through the towns and cities, and all of them were of course monitored by the regime's security police.

Didn't you realize that the blood stains on your cloths would make you a suspicious person?

Actually, I removed all the blood spots when I found the little stream of water at night. No visible stains remained on my clothes. It was rather my feeling which disturbed me. Uzer was clean too. What we feared more was the smell of blood coming from our bodies.

One more frightening thing was that we were totally strange to that community. We knew nothing about that area but we avoided unnecessary questions.

How long was the journey to Rumady?

It was about thirty minutes.

Had you seen Rumady before?

Yes, I think there might have been many similar cases. But we couldn't know what happened to the others. Uzer and I met each other by chance. I know of two other Anfal victims who made their ways back home. There might have been others who had escaped the first attempt but were recaptured and later killed.

In Rumady, did you take a taxi to Baghdad or did you go to the bus station to travel by public bus?

We went to the bus station and found a bus ready to leave to Baghdad. It was a 24-seater bus. We were terrified to find two military policemen sitting in the bus. I was disappointed and thought that it must be God's will for us to be killed by Saddam's gang. We did not look at them and we did not leave the bus either. We just chose different seats to avoid talking in Kurdish to each other. Two seats beside each other were risky too because of the smell of blood. In few minutes the bus was full of soldiers. In fact, Uzer and I were the only civilians on the bus! Miraculously, we made the journey through several military checkpoints without being asked for our ID cards, simply because the bus was full of military men!

Thanks God we arrived in Baghdad safe and sound. This time it was the troops who were angels from heaven. We felt relieved and relaxed.

Baghdad was the capital of the regime who ordered the genocide of our nation. So how could you feel happy and relaxed?

Our main goal was to reach our homes and to continue living with our families. Baghdad was just a transit point.

What was the first thing you did in Baghdad?

When we got off from the Rumady bus we felt like being released from prison. We took a taxi to visit Abdul Qadir Gelani mosque.

in the same convoy. His bus must have arrived a bit later, because they had seen the first shooting process and they were sure that none of them were likely to survive - so they decided to die in another way, to give the killer a lesson before being killed like sheep.

Their plan was to attack the soldiers who opened the door to take the first pair. They did so: a man whose name was Salam attacked the first soldier, but the other one could shoot Salam and killed him at once. The soldiers came back and the fight resumed again. Uzer's friends could put their hands on a gun but unfortunately the soldier was able to pull out the bullet clip from the rifle.

The victims were weakened because of lack of food and drink; but altogether they showed an incredible resistance to stop the troops killing them according to the military plan. The soldiers open fire to kill everybody indiscriminately in the bus including one of the soldiers who had fallen into the hands of the Kurdish victims. They shot and shot to make sure absolutely no-one could survive in the bus. When all the victims became motionless and the darkness of the night had fallen, one soldier entered the bus to check that no-one was alive. However, Uzer was alive and he could make his way out before the bulldozer came and pushed the bus and the victims into the pit.

Just like me, Uzer had made his way by stepping on the piles of massacred innocent people. Uzer too stepped on victims who were begging for drops of water, but he couldn't help them.

The rest of his survival story is similar to that of mine. He too was in the same refugee camp and took the same bus to Rumady.

Do you think that there had been other survivors who had escaped the shooting but were not lucky enough to find an inhabited place, or had been killed by predatory animals, or died because of dehydration?

Did you ask anybody where the bus terminal was or did you know where it was?

Yes, I knew where Nahza was. It wasn't too far from the mosque, we reached it easily but we found it as crowded as Topzawa camp. We only asked one person about the first bus to leave. This man was guiding passengers to the right places.

Was it usual to ask for the bus of your own city?

These questions are taken as normal. Our question caused no strange reaction.

Did you sit together in the bus?

Yes we sat together and started eating, but we had to leave as quickly as possible.

Why? What had happened?

Well, the Nahza bus terminus was full of men belong to the security forces and military intelligence service. They were watching the passengers, one of them came closer to the bus and glared twice at us, but he didn't enter the bus. Uzer was terrified. "This is the military officer who registered our names in Topzawa camp" said Uzer. Without wasting time, I threw away my sandwich, got off the bus and hid myself. Uzer did the same.

I was not sure about Uzer's claim but it was better to avoid the risk, especially when the man bore the rank of officer.

Did you run away?

No, we didn't. We had begun to run it would have simply drawn the attention of the police and the soldiers. I went away without looking right or left for fear that somebody might recognize me and ask me to stop. I looked for Uzer but I couldn't find him. I wanted to see what had happened to him but

Why to the Gelani mosque?

We went to pray. We thanked God for our survival and asked him to help us for the rest of our journey and that we could meet our families again.

Did you know anything about the whereabouts of your family?

No, I did not, because after leaving them in Qadir Karam we were cut off. All I knew was that they were taken to Kirkuk. Whether they had reached Kirkuk is what I didn't know. However I remained optimistic that I would eventually find them.

After the prayer and worshipping in the Gelani mosque what was your next step?

We had a good rest, regained a good state of mind. We were not secured but we could think quietly. We planned how to get back to our home land - we had to go to the bus terminus in Baghdad called 'Nahza' for buses to Kurdistan.

Had you been in Baghdad before?

Yes, I had been there before.

How did you go to the Nahza terminus?

We took a taxi. Although we were both starving, we avoided going and sitting in a restaurant as policemen checked public places continuously. Besides we didn't want to waste time. Baghdad is a big city but we knew nobody, there was nobody to help us. After we arrived at the bus terminus, we bought some fast food and sat in the Kirkuk bus.

What was the type of the bus?

It was the same 24-passenger Japanese bus known as 'Coaster.'

How about Uzer, did you find him in the end?

No, I never found him.

What did you do when night came?

Well, the night came but I couldn't calm down at all. I did not go near Nahza again. I decided to spend a night in a hotel. I tried three hotels but they refused to put me up without showing an ID paper. I thought about going to the Gelani Mosque again to take refuge there. But unfortunately, the doors were closed.

I knew that the religious staff was inside but I didn't want to disturb them. I went round the mosque and found an empty place behind the building. It was a bit chilly but I could spend the night there. Once more I became a target for the wild dogs. I think it was the smell of blood that attracted them again. However I spent another restless night until finally dawn came and it was time to do something.

I had to make a move, but where to? What should I do if I was stopped by the police and asked for my ID? Besides, my appearance marked me out as a criminal person.

This means that you had had a long night to think and decide. What was your next step?

There was no easy decision to make. However, the first thing I did the following morning was to find a barber and get a haircut and a clean shave. A new idea came to my mind about going to the Alawi Centre for goods transportation and travels by lorry, and pretends to be a worker that might help me pass through the checkpoints.

There in that transport centre, I found many kind people involved in that business, they were from Erbil and Suleimanya. I told them that because my papers were lost in a car accident, I couldn't travel by bus. They understood my problem and introduced me to a lorry driver who was the first to leave. The driver promised me to take me to Kirkuk as soon as he had

in vain, there was no trace of him. I feared that he had been caught and that I would be next.

I was very confused, I felt as if the whole world was watching me. I didn't want to get close to anybody and no place seemed safe to me. I waited until it was dark and the long daylight hours were over.

Tell me, did you see the officer too?

Yes, yes I saw him resting his shoulder on the bus window.

I mean did you recognize him? Had you seen him before? Was he the same officer as in Topzawa?

I had neither seen him before nor had I recognized him. It was Uzer who said that he was the same officer.

Do you think that the great state of fear made Uzer imagine unrealistic things?

To be honest, I cannot say that. We were really terrified. Nevertheless, the officer glared at us two times.

He might have looked at you because you were eating in the bus.

Maybe, or maybe not, but we had to consider every possibility and decided to save our skin. We did not want to get caught and to have the same tragic experience.

Do you think that they would have punished you again if you were caught; especially as you had survived by chance?

When they took all those people from Topzawa to the shooting field, none of the victims had done even the smallest crime; they were all innocent. They did not bother to question anybody. The shooting was taking place indiscriminately. The appearance of any soldier meant death to us: it meant the mass graves of thousands and thousands of innocent people.

decided to tell him the full story and asked him to advise his relatives and friends not to trust the regime's propaganda and keep away from the armed forces because they were prepared to kill everybody.

The place where I left him is called Latifawa. My sister lived in this area. I found her house and had to work hard to awaken them because it was already late in the night. They were shocked to find me in that situation and started asking me about what had happened to me and how I could escape and what had happened to my other brother and my cousin Salih! I asked them to relax and wait for their quick return under a governmental amnesty. I gave them this false hope to avoid panic.

You were in your sister's house, your brothers were missing but nonetheless you could have a small family reunion. How did you feel? Could you sleep at that night at all?

I was very exhausted and slept till the morning.

What was their reaction the next morning? Especially you told them that there was a general amnesty from Saddam Hussein? When did they expect to be reunited with the rest of the missing men?

They waited for the return of our brother right up until the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003!

I had a bath in the morning and they took my clothes for cleaning. They were shocked by the amount of blood on my underclothes. Then they started questioning me about where the blood came from. I created a new story telling them that I had been taken to prison but the van had been involved in an accident. I had been injured but had managed to escape.

Should I have told them that I was a survivor of the Anfal, there would have been many families coming to ask me about their loved ones. This meant that the authorities could find me again.

loaded up the lorry. He was planning to travel to Erbil via Kirkuk.

It was so strange that those people were busy with their everyday lives as they had never heard about the Anfal genocide operations. I wanted to go to them and tell them my story but I didn't.

I sat alone beside a wall and prayed humbly to God, begging him for favor and waiting for his mercy from heaven. The lorry driver came and told me that the load was ready and we can start. I myself was eager to leave Baghdad as soon as possible. We started our journey late in the afternoon. The cargo of wood was to be taken to Erbil. The driver was happy with what I would offer as my fare and I helped him with loading the lorry. The owner of the wood didn't need to come with us because the driver knew the city of Erbil very well. I sat beside the driver but every time we reached a checkpoint, he asked me to go and hide among the wooden planks. There were many checkpoints but he knew their locations, so I could hide myself at the right time. When a driver was alone, he was not usually questioned by the security police. The driver was very friendly. He seemed to doubt my false story but I didn't want to tell him the right one.

We arrived at Kirkuk, the first city inside Kurdistan at night. I asked him to drop me off at a place called Shorja. When I saw that part of the city, I started trembling. I remembered the tragedy that happened only four days before; I remembered the convoy of military vehicles that carried me, my brothers and my cousin Salih, and all that women and children. I was totally lost in my thoughts when the driver spoke to me and asked whether I wanted to get off. I asked him to find the petrol station of Shorja and he found it for me. Before leaving his cabin, I prepared my fare to pay him but he held my hand and said that he wanted to help me. In a serious tone, he asked me, "Tell me, what your problem is?" and said that he was a fellow Kurd. I

By God, I did not tell my wife the real story until we were sat down in the American embassy in Ankara and waiting for our visa.

Why did you hide the real story?

I had a fear of being detected by police.

Fear from your wife and children?

I feared they might let it slip when talking with others. When your secret is discovered it is no more yours. I trusted my wife very much but if I had told her about the fate of our brothers and cousins, she would have lost hope and my other relatives could have realized that my wife was no more waiting for them and that would have created questions.

Had you heard about Anfal before being a subject of that genocide operation yourself?

Why, has it happened before? I mean was there any Anfal operation executed to other people?

No, never. But when did you hear about it?

When massive operations of destruction and killing started in Kurdistan, we knew that it was the genocide of Kurdish people. When I survived and joined my people I was called a victim of Anfal. That is when I heard about it.

You were reunited with your family in a place called Shorsh which was assigned for the remainder of Anfal families. Did you fear that you would be identified especially by those who had lost their loved ones and were waiting for some news from somebody like you?

I did not tell anything about Anfal to anybody - not even to my close relatives. Nobody knew what had happened to me.

Later on, as my sister's house was rather small and in a very public place, I did not feel safe. I moved to the house of a friend called Abdul Hussein. His house was bigger and I could hide there for 20 days.

Was the house in Kirkuk city?

Yes, it was.

Where did you go after leaving your friend's house?

I went to a nearby town called Laylan and stayed with a relative who was an officer in the mercenary forces. Later on, his men took me to Chamchamal then onto a place called Shorsh where I could be reunited with my wife and children.

How did you answer your close relatives when they asked you of what had happened to you and the fate of other relatives?

I never told them the real story. I always created suitable stories. On one occasion, I told them that I could escape before reaching Topzawa concentration camp.

Did they trust you?

Yes, I think they did. The main reason I say this is because I was only away for few days. Moreover they stopped asking me about other victims.

Did you expect that Uzer had told people the real story and that the security agents would detect you again?

To be honest I was living in a permanent state of fear. I was always expecting police to come at any time and catch me. That is why I was making a hiding place wherever I stayed.

Did you even hide the truth to your wife and children?

No, nobody.

So nobody knew that you were a survivor of the mass graves of the Arabian Desert?

Only God knew that.

Not even Uzer?

Yes, Uzer knew that too, but he had disappeared in Baghdad. I knew nothing about his whereabouts. I thought that he had been detained again.

Did you ever ask his relatives about what had happened to him?

To tell you the truth, I wanted very much to learn what had happened to him. However, I did not dare to ask anybody about his fate.

What about the truck driver who brought you back to Kirkuk, especially as you had told him the full story and given him advice for his family and friends?

I didn't worry about him. It is true that I had told him the full story but I did not tell him where I lived or who I was and he hadn't asked me either.

Well, you didn't stay long with your sister in Kirkuk. Did you fear that the driver would tell the authorities about your hiding place?

No, for sure, that was not the case. The driver was a gentleman. He did his best to help me staying away from the enemy. In short, he saved my life. Indeed, I was negligent not to ask his name and address, I could have met again and thanked him for that perfect job he had done. What I really hope is that this interview will pave the way for our meeting again.

Why?

As I have told you before, I feared being discovered by the regime's secret services. And in the mean time, it was too tragic to tell the Anfal story.

For how long did you plan to keep your secret?

I planned to keep it until the fall of Saddam Hussein because all his dirty works would then be discovered.

Did you feel guilty for hiding the truth, a big truth from your nation?

Guilty of what? I did not execute the Anfal operations.

How about those years following the Kurdish uprising when Kurds lived in a liberated area away from Saddam Hussein's regime? Did you feel like a free man or did you still fear another detention?

Do you mean when I was near Shorsh place near the town of Chamchamal?

Yes, there or wherever you lived?

Nobody came to look for me personally but many times Iraqi army units came close to the place where we were living. On those occasions, I had to hide. There was a suitable place for me, so I took a refuge there whenever I feared the arrival of the troops.

How come you did not cause questions or suspicions?

Well, I had made a well-knit place between piles of building blocks. I could only get there through a narrow path. I didn't let anybody know about it.

Did no-one from your family or friends realize that you had a hiding place?

Why didn't you want to?

Why should I?

Just to tell him what had happened to all those men he handed over to the Iraqi army instead of taking them to Suleimanya city...

I did not want to tell the story to anybody, not even to my wife. So why should I tell Mu'tassam?

Because there is a difference, you should have told him about the mass graves where all those young Kurds were buried.

Well, I did not do that.

Let us now come to the last part of your story, how did you arrange to go to the USA?

From the beginning of this interview, I asked you to put my situation your mind, especially as I am an eyewitness for an international tribunal.

I agreed to that, but my question is how did the Americans know all about your story and about your survival of the genocidal operation of Anfal?

I don't know either.

How come? The Americans do not know unseen things.

Well, an American man came to visit me in my house near Chamchamal and he already incredibly knew a lot about me. At the beginning, I wanted to deny that I was Faraj but I couldn't.

Did he find you just by chance?

No, he had worked hard to find me.

When the Kurdish uprising took place and Saddam's regime lost control over most parts of Kurdistan, why didn't you tell the people then about the fate of Anfal victims?

I just didn't like to talk about the Anfal operations.

Why not? Didn't you see that he was now powerless to touch you?

No, I wouldn't be at rest until his downfall in 2003.

So on the first hand, you kept your story because you were scared to tell it!

Yes, I feared the revenge of the authorities and the gossip of the babblers.

Why did you avoid people anyway?

Honestly it was a big responsibility to tell the story of thousands upon thousands of unfortunate victims to their families and related people. I knew mothers who had lost five sons and families who had lost twelve of their members. As for my part I did not have the nerve to tell them about these massive losses.

Did you meet the mercenary boss Sheikh Mu'tassam after your safe return?

I put myself under house arrest. I met nobody not even Sheikh Mu'tassam.

Not even after the uprising?

No, I haven't met him at all.

You couldn't or you didn't want to meet him?

I was not sure that I could meet him and I was not keen to meet him at all.

Between the time of the interview and the day of leaving to the USA, did anything happen?

Thanks God, nothing happened.

When the time came and you prepared yourself to go to America, wasn't it then possible to tell your story to the people?

I told you that I only told my wife and children the real story in 1998. We were in the American Embassy in Ankara. And that was only because I had to answer the Embassy's questions about my story in front of my wife and children.

After your family had heard your story, did they blame you for not telling them the real story?

No, they didn't. Instead they were crying out of sympathy to me.

I forgot to ask you this question in the right time. Did you fulfill your promise to sacrifice a sheep as thanks for your survival from the firing squad?

Unfortunately, because of the poverty, I couldn't do that in Kurdistan but I fulfilled it in the USA.

In the course of these last 16 years, have you been able to forget the painful experience of Anfal? Especially as you have spent the last 6 years in the Land of Free?

Not actually. Right now when I am narrating the story, the words come deep from my heart. My heart is aching for all those innocent victims. How can one forget the view of soldiers stepping with their boots on hundreds of newly shot people just to make sure that they are dead and if they were not, they shot them again and again? Also how could I forget the two young brothers, for whom I jumped the queue before seeing their

When he met you and asked you if you were Faraj, did you asked him how he knew your name.

Well, I asked him but he had got all the information from Uzer so I couldn't deny the truth any more.

Does this mean that when he mentioned Uzer you had no choice but to him the story?

I did not know how they found Uzer and how could they persuade him to tell them the story, the full story how we met each other in the bus to Rumady and how he recognized me and asked me to sit next to him. He even told them the story of searching for his sister's house in Rumady and how we reached Baghdad and got shocked by the military officer, the incident that separated us for ever.

After knowing all these facts, no room remained for argument. All I did was to ask them not to tell my secret to anybody.

Did he agree?

Yes, he himself and his interpreter agreed. They were rather keen to listen to my story.

Well, when you became sure that Uzer had already told them everything, why did you fear, why did you put conditions on talking to them? And why did you still not tell the story to the victim's families?

Uzer did not speak to the public. He only told his story to those foreigners. And they asked him to maintain secrecy until they went back to the United States and do their work in order to take Saddam to the International Court for Crimes against Humanity. There he would be an eyewitness.

From then on, I had to be even more careful as they had advised me of the possibility of assassination by Saddam's secret agents.

They are all massacred and they are in the pits of mass graves. You can only search for skeletons.

Do you think that we can find all of them?

Yes, we can and we must.

In which way should we find them?

We have to start with the people who have the information.

Do you mean information about the mass graves?

Yes, I do.

Can you give me an example?

Yes, I am personally ready to go and show places where we were shot but this must be after the decision of returning the corpses back to Kurdistan.

Can you find the way?

Yes, I can.

Apart from you, will there be others to help?

Yes, of course. Because Saddam is no longer there, even the killers and the bulldozers drivers can help.

And what if we can't get their help?

Then, the Kurdish people must turn the whole land of Iraq upside down. We can identify the Kurdish clothes worn by our men and women.

What should we do with the corpses of the victims?

We should rebury them in suitable places beside glorious monuments.

Where do you think is the most suitable place in Kurdistan?

death? How could I forget the joy shown by Saddam's soldiers while killing all those innocent people?

Can I ask you as a victim of this notorious operation, how do you describe the Anfal?

Anfal is a unique type of crime which can not be described by few words. It was a process of mass killing even before God decides their fate.

Would you like to see Saddam and his gang suffering from the same tragedy that you had experienced?

No, no, we needn't seek for revenge. What happened to the Kurdish people has become a story of the past. But what I wish for is that they will stand in front of justice to explain why they practiced all these crimes against a peaceful nation.

Now you don't fear anything, would you like the people to know your story?

Yes, I really want to tell the whole story but I have still wait for the things to settle down with the Americans.

Do you promise me to make a television interview in a proper time?

What I promise you is that I will discuss this proposal with the related people in the US and then let you know

Now we are reaching the end of the interview, I have asked all the questions that I wanted to. Do you have any terms on publishing it?

My only request is to date the interview back to 1992.

If I ask you about the fate of the Anfal victims, what would your answer be?

The most suitable place is Topzawa.

Why Topzawa?

Because, Topzawa was the gathering point of all the victims and from there, the roads to mass graves started.

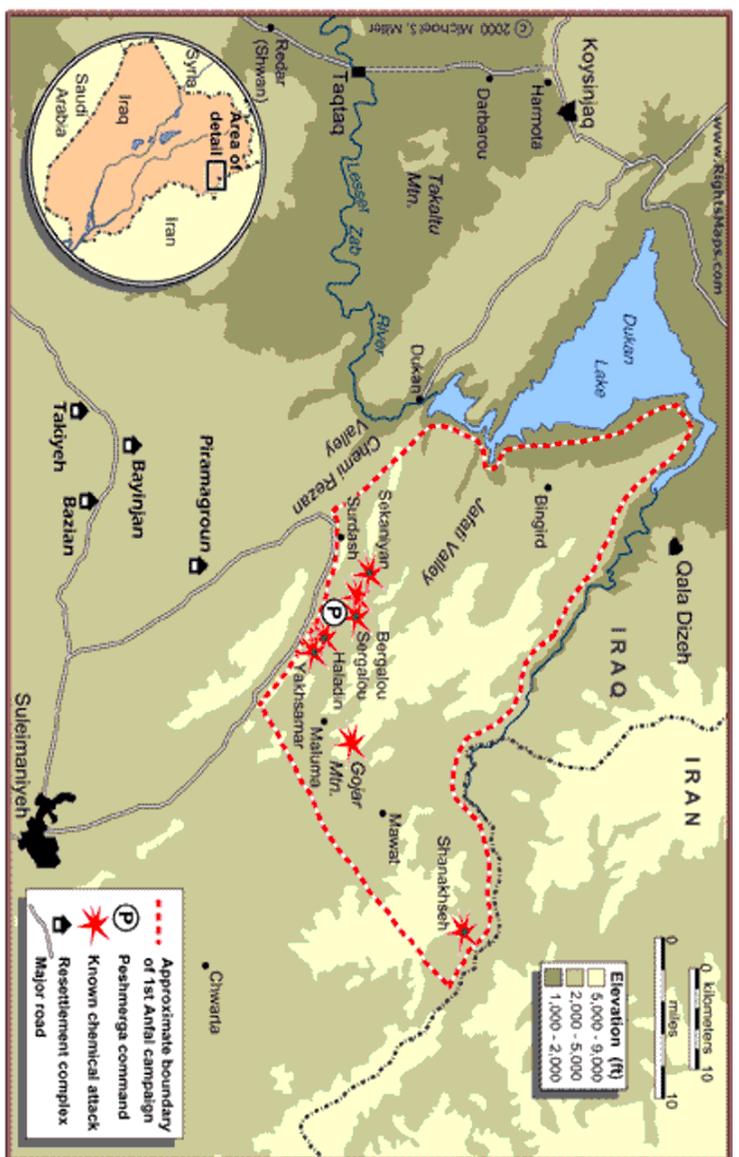
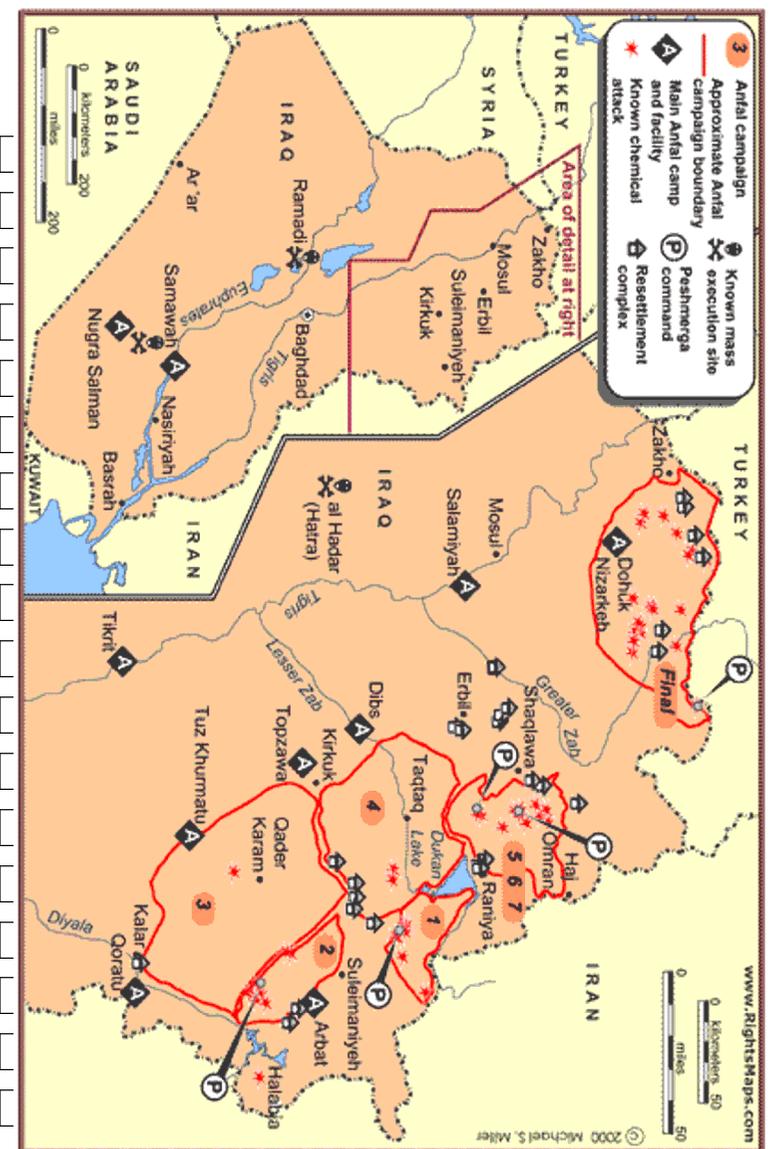
Thanks very much and see you for the television.

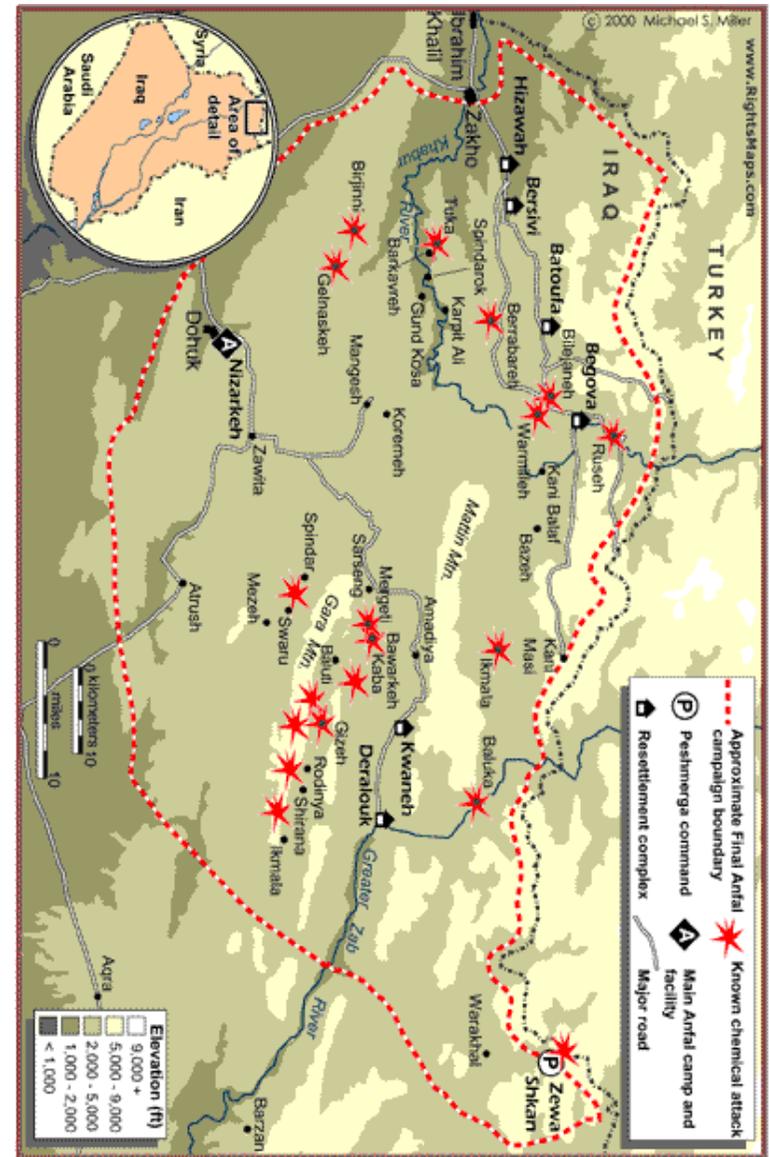
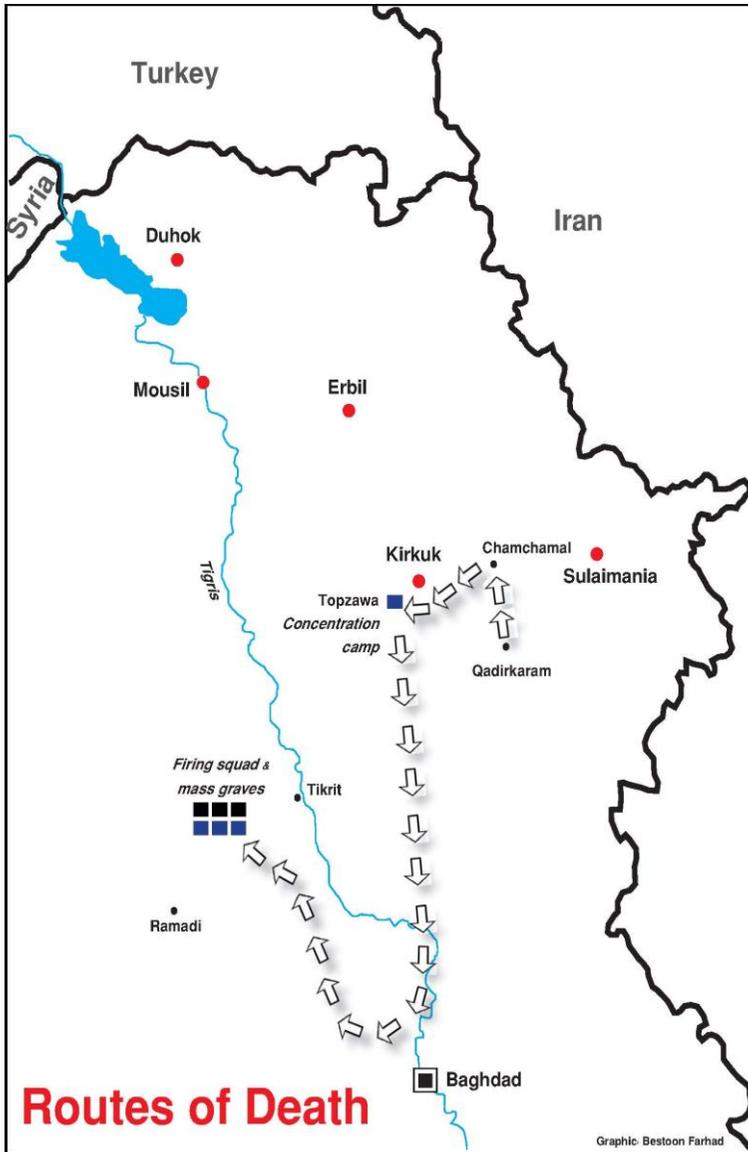
I hope we will meet on that occasion too.



The Topzawa concentration camp looked like the Dooms-day. Thousands of men, women and children were packed there. The Tyrants, Executers and Infanticides were all there. It was time to look for the credibility if God and his Angels, the UN and its Organizations, the World communities and the Human Rights Claimers.

Faraj, the Anfal eye-witness

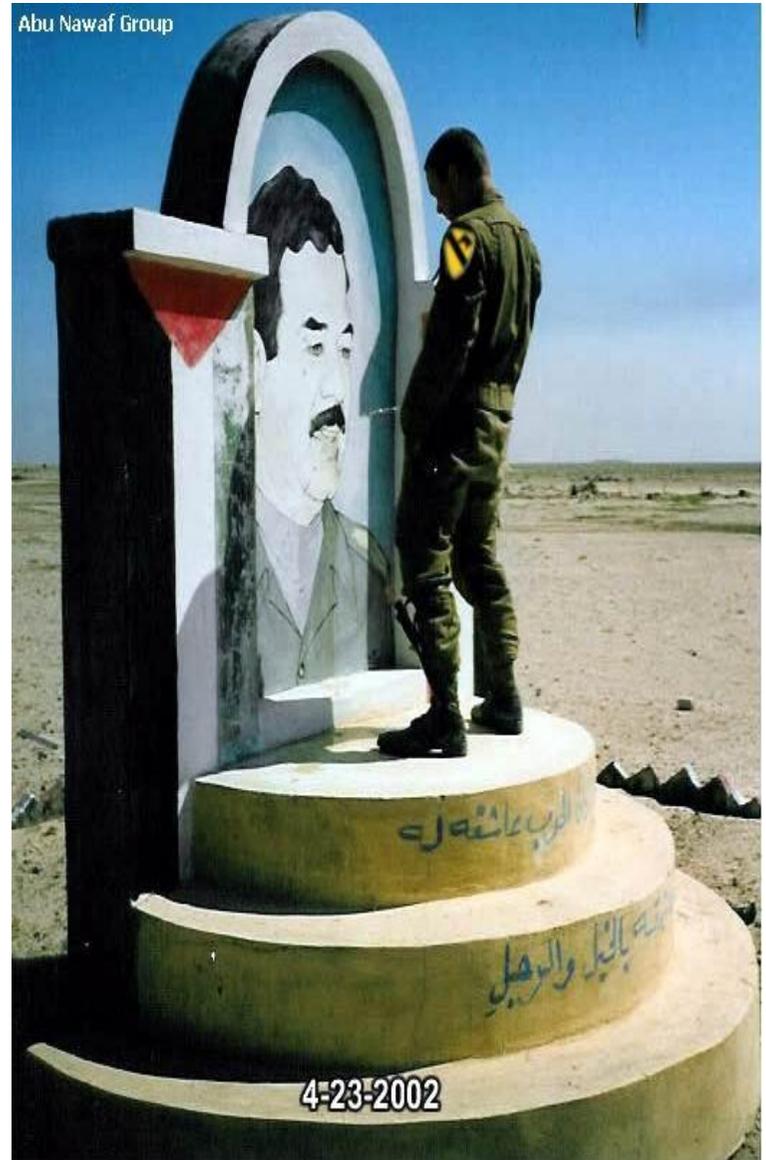
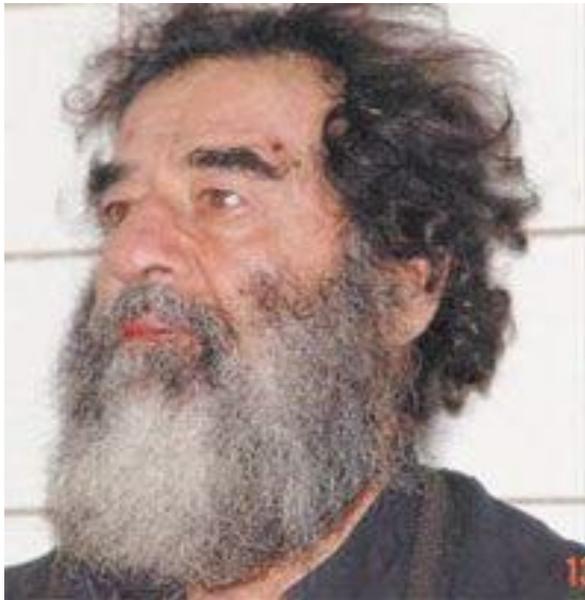


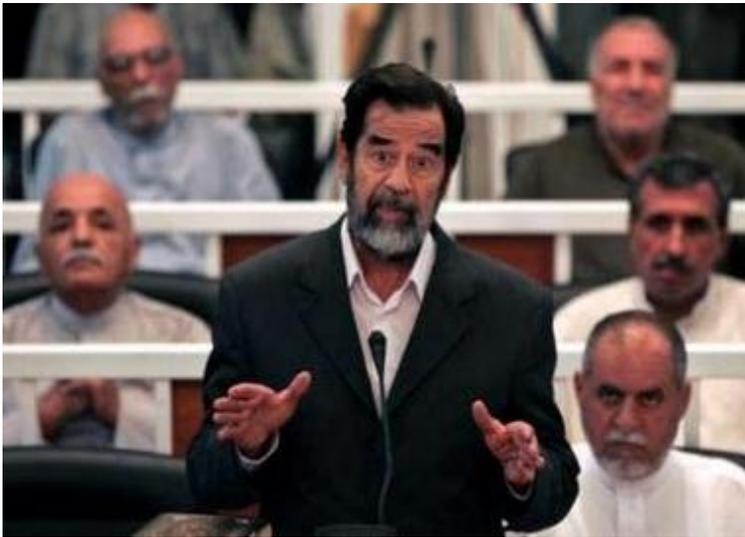
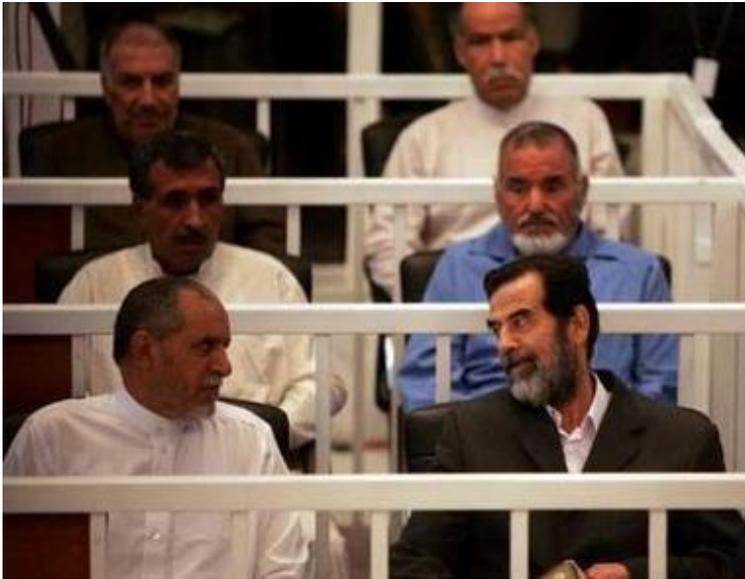


















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