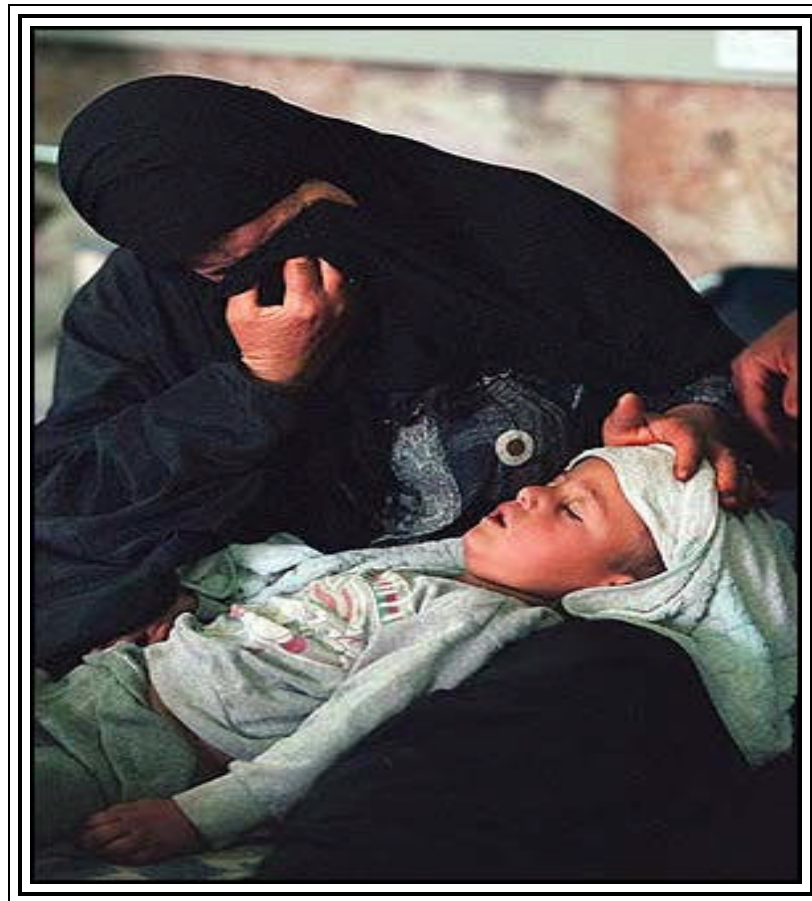


# Iraq: A Population Silenced

**U.S. Department of State**

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor  
Washington, DC

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## Executive Summary

In 1979, immediately upon coming to power, Saddam Hussein silenced all political opposition in Iraq and converted his one-party state into a cult of personality. Over the more than 20 years since then, his regime has systematically executed, tortured, imprisoned, raped, terrorized and repressed Iraqi people. Iraq is a nation rich in culture with a long history of intellectual and scientific achievement. Yet Saddam Hussein has silenced its scholars and doctors, as well as its women and children.

Iraqi dissidents are tortured, killed, or disappear in order to deter other Iraqi citizens from speaking out against the government or demanding change. A system of collective punishment tortures entire families or ethnic groups for the acts of one dissident. Women are raped and often videotaped during rape to blackmail their families. Citizens are publicly beheaded, and their families are required to display the heads of the deceased as a warning to others who might question the politics of this regime. Saddam Hussein was also the first leader to use chemical weapons against his own population, silencing more than 60 villages and 30,000 citizens with poisonous gas.

Saddam Hussein has tried to silence ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq as well. During the Anfal Campaign of 1987-88, Saddam Hussein's regime killed and tortured the Kurdish population. It eliminated many Kurdish villages, and forced surviving Kurds into zones where he could control them. His regime has suppressed the Shi'a religious community through killings and arrests and bans their Friday prayers and books in certain regions. He has also targeted the citizens of other nations in his region, killing and torturing Kuwaiti and Iranian citizens, among others.



The Iraqi people are not allowed to vote to remove the government. Freedom of expression, association and movement do not exist in Iraq. The media is tightly controlled – Saddam Hussein's son owns the daily Iraqi newspaper. Iraqi citizens cannot assemble except in support of the government. Iraqi citizens cannot freely leave Iraq.

The international community, including the U.N. and internationally based nongovernmental organizations, has documented and repeatedly condemned this regime's horrific record of abuse. Saddam Hussein simply ignores the will of the rest of the world.

Saddam Hussein has given the Iraqi people a terrible choice – to remain silent - or face the consequences. But despite his regime's attempts to silence the Iraqi people, their voices are still being heard.

## **Al-Shaikh Yahya Muhsin Ja'far al-Zeini**

*On July 2, 1999, a young theology student in his late 20s named al-Shaikh Yahya returned home to find that his father and two brothers had been detained as substitute prisoners until Saddam's secret police could arrest him. Al-Shaikh Yahya was suspected of being a supporter of a prominent Shi'a cleric whose murder had set off protests six months before. The protests had been brutally suppressed by the regime's security forces but the subsequent crackdown continued.*

*Seeing no other option, al-Shaikh Yahya submitted, was arrested and blindfolded and taken to the Saddam Security Directorate building "for questioning." After being forced to watch one of his friends being tortured, the security officials took him to another room where he awaited his own torture. His recount of what happened next is chilling:*

*"[T]hey stripped me of my clothes and a security officer said "the person you saw has confessed against you". He said to me "You followers of [Ayatollah] al-Sadr have carried out acts harmful to the security of the country and have been distributing anti-government statements coming from abroad. He asked if I have any contact with an Iraqi religious scholar based in Iran who has been signing these statements. I said "I do not have any contacts with him" . . . I was then left suspended [naked and handcuffed, with a board between my elbows and knees on two high chairs]...My face was looking upward. They attached an electric wire on my penis and the other end of the wire is attached to an electric motor. One security man was hitting my feet with a cable. Electric shocks were applied every few minutes and were increased. I must have been suspended for more than an hour. I lost consciousness. . . . They repeated this method [of torture] a few times."*

*Al-Shaikh Yahya was regularly subjected to electric shocks and beating on his feet. For two months of his detention, he slept on the floor with his hands tied behind his back and his face on the floor. According to his testimony, this was more unbearable than the electric shocks. He was also suspended from a window non-stop for three days once, and at one point during this suspension, had a heavy weight attached to his genitals.*

*Five months later, al-Shaikh Yahya and 21 other detainees were transferred to a separate detention center also in Baghdad. He was detained without charge or trial for another four months, until April 14, 2000, when he was released.*

[Account taken from Amnesty International, IRAQ Systematic torture of political prisoners, August 15, 2001]

Al-Shaikh Yahya's experience was not an isolated event, but just one example of how Saddam Hussein and his regime have systematically abused Iraqis in order to silence their beliefs.

## **“Traitors” Are Silenced**

Since 1979, Saddam Hussein and his regime have systematically murdered, maimed, tortured, imprisoned, raped, terrorized and repressed the Iraqi people. For more than two decades, this “Republic of Fear,” a term developed by noted Iraqi scholar Kanan Makiya, has targeted and preyed upon so-called enemies of the state in order to maintain power, get rich, and acquire land. These enemies are most often innocent Iraqi citizens and include mothers, wives, school children, teachers, Muslims, Kurds, and intellectuals. His regime also routinely arrests, detains, tortures and kills the relatives of these so-called enemies. Saddam Hussein has also found enemies in neighboring Gulf States, such as Kuwait, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

*“[T]he political-legal order in Iraq is not compatible with respect for human rights and, rather, entails systematic and systemic violations throughout the country, affecting virtually the whole population.” - Max van der Stoep, UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in Iraq, 1999*

The practice began immediately upon Saddam Hussein’s becoming President in July 1979 when he ordered his security forces to publicly and forcibly remove, imprison and eventually kill several long-standing, distinguished members of the Iraqi National Assembly. He claimed that there were “traitors” in the National Assembly. Saddam Hussein calmly smoked a cigar in the Parliament as he videotaped 66 members of the Ba’th senior leadership being taken away. He later called upon other senior members of the Ba’th party leadership to participate in public “democratic executions” of their fallen comrades. Since then, the same tactics have been used to silence Iraqis of all walks of life. However you earn the title of “traitor,” you will be silenced – one way or another.

*“Iraq under Saddam’s regime has become a land of hopelessness, sadness, and fear. A country where people are ethnically cleansed; prisoners are tortured in more than 300 prisons in Iraq. Rape is systematic . . . congenital malformation, birth defects, infertility, cancer, and various disorders are the results of Saddam’s gassing of his own people. . . the killing and torturing of husbands in front of their wives and children . . . Iraq under Saddam has become a hell and a museum of crimes.”*  
- Safia Al Souhail, *Iraqi Citizen, Advocacy Director, International Alliance for Justice*

Iraq is a nation with a rich cultural heritage. Its people have a history of intellectual and scientific achievement. Showing no respect for life, human dignity and fundamental freedoms, Saddam Hussein’s totalitarian regime has turned back the clock on centuries of progress. His regime silences Iraqis who demand freedom and a normal life for themselves and their families.

## Silence by Murder

For more than 20 years, Saddam Hussein has executed perceived opponents without respect for rule of law. Saddam Hussein silences these alleged dissidents because he believes that their political beliefs, faith, ethnic background, family members or acquaintances are a threat to his power. Some are first taken as political prisoners before being executed. In February 1998, 400 prisoners at Abu Gharaib prison were executed summarily. Two months later, 100 detainees from Radwaniyah Prison were buried alive in a pit in Ramadi province. These killings were supposed to “clean out” the prisons. More than 3,000 people have been killed in a similar manner since 1997.

Summary executions in Iraq take many cruel forms. A quick yet effective method is to line up the entire male population of a village and shoot them systematically, one at a time, in order to eliminate the village. Saddam Hussein’s regime, however, often prefers methods that take more time, and inflict more pain on the victim and the victim’s family. His regime has poisoned political prisoners by giving them a slow-acting poison, *thallium*, which slowly infiltrates the system and takes several days to bring death. Iraqi citizens are often decapitated in front of family members, and at other times, they are shot in front of family members and the family is charged for the cost of the bullet. Saddam Hussein has perfected many of these methods of murder on Kurds in Northern Iraq and religious leaders from the Shi’a community, claiming that they are disloyal to the Government. Once murdered, many Iraqis are buried in unmarked graves so that their family members cannot visit them.



*Iraqi child victims of one of Saddam's chemical weapons attacks*

*“It has been the Iraqi regime’s policy to change the demography of Iraq, by eradicating the Kurdish population from areas that are deemed important in the north of the country. The regime has done this through forced deportation, arbitrary arrests, and systematic torture.” – Paiman Halmat, teacher, former Iraqi citizen*

As a particularly brutal example of silencing political opposition, it is estimated that at least 30,000 to 60,000 members of the Shi’a community were killed during their post-Gulf war political insurrection in southern Iraq.

## Silence Through Torture

Under Saddam Hussein's orders, the security apparatus in Iraq routinely and systematically tortures its citizens. Beatings, rape, breaking of limbs and denial of food and water are commonplace in Iraqi detention centers. Saddam Hussein's regime has also invented unique and horrific methods of torture including electric shocks to a male's genitals, pulling out fingernails, suspending individuals from rotating ceiling fans, dripping acid on a victim's skin, gouging out eyes, and burning victims with a hot iron or blowtorch.

Gwynne Roberts, a reporter for the London-based *Independent*, describes her experience in a torture center in Northern Iraq:

*In one cell pieces of human flesh – ear lobes – were nailed to the wall, and blood splattered the ceiling. A large metal fan hung from the ceiling and my guide told me prisoners were attached to the fan and beaten with clubs as they twirled. There were hooks in the ceiling used to suspend victims. A torture victim told me that prisoners were also crucified, nails driven through their hands into the wall. A favorite technique was to hang men from the hooks and attach a heavy weight to their testicles.*

*- Independent, March 29, 1991*

Foreign citizens are not spared the brutality either. Large numbers of Kuwaiti citizens were murdered, tortured and raped during the Gulf War. More than 2 dozen torture centers in Kuwait City have been discovered, and photographic evidence confirms reports of electric shocks, acid baths, summary execution and the use of electric drills to penetrate a victim's body. Many innocent civilian citizens were also used as human shields.

Branding and amputations have been routine in Iraqi hospitals. In 1994, the Iraqi government issued at least nine decrees that established cruel penalties such as branding. Amputation has been used against citizens convicted of military desertion. One citizen whose hand was cut off was paraded on national television as a method of instilling fear in the people.

In 1994 and 1995 alone, large numbers of soldiers had portions of their ears cut off for deserting the army. The government branded an “X” on the foreheads of these soldiers so that Iraqi citizens did not think that these soldiers were wounded war heroes. Doctors who refused to perform the operations were threatened with reprisals, and many have been arrested and detained. The Iraqi authorities also issued a decree in 1994 making it illegal for doctors to perform plastic or corrective surgery for victims of branding and amputation. In 2000, a new Iraqi decree was issued authorizing the government to amputate the tongues of citizens who criticize Saddam Hussein or his government.

### ***Torture Methods in Iraq***

- *Medical experimentation*
- *Beatings*
- *Crucifixion*
- *Hammering nails into the fingers and hands*
- *Amputating the penis or breasts with an electric carving knife*
- *Spraying insecticides into a victim’s eyes*
- *Branding with a hot iron*
- *Committing rape while the victim’s spouse is forced to watch*
- *Pouring boiling water into a rectum*
- *Nailing the tongue to a wooden board*
- *Extracting teeth with pliers*
- *Using bees and scorpions to sting naked children in front of their parents*

## The Missing Are Silent

Many Iraqi citizens simply “disappear” never to be heard from again. Widespread disappearances are prevalent and occur regularly among Kurdish minorities. In 2001, Amnesty International claimed that Saddam Hussein’s Government was responsible for the majority of the hundreds of thousands of persons that have disappeared in the Middle East and North Africa in recent decades.

*“If you are arrested, your life is over.”*

*- “Ahmed,” an anonymous current Iraqi citizen tells Cameron W. Barr of The Christian Science Monitor (Oct. 31, 2002)*

The UN Special Rapporteur on Iraq to the Commission on Human Rights has specifically documented 16,496 cases of disappearances, but states that the number of Kurds alone missing from the 1988 Anfal Campaign could reach tens of thousands. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International place the number of disappeared between 70,000 and 150,000. According to the UN Special Rapporteur, the second largest targeted group for disappearances were the Shi’a Muslims.



*Iraqi women demonstrate on Oct. 31, 2002, outside the Foreign Ministry in Baghdad, demanding information about their relatives who have been missing since the Gulf War. (AP Photo/Jassim Mohammed)*



## Chemical Weapons Silence Iraqi Citizens

Saddam Hussein became the first leader in the world to systematically and aggressively gas his own people. Between 1983 and 1988 alone, he murdered more than 30,000 Iraqi citizens with mustard gas and nerve agents. Several international organizations claim that he killed more than 60,000 Iraqi citizens with chemicals, including large numbers



*A Mother and child gassed in Halabjah.*

*A Kurdish boy killed by chemical weapons*



of women and children. During his two-year Anfal campaign against the Kurdish population, Saddam Hussein used these chemical weapons against more than 40 villages.

*It was 6:20 PM on March 16, 1988, when a smell of apples descended on the town of Halabja. This Iraqi Kurdish town of 80,000 was instantly engulfed in a thick cloud of gas, as chemicals soaked into the clothes, mouths, lungs, eyes and skin of innocent civilians. For three days, Iraqi Air Force planes dropped mustard gas, nerve agents known as sarin and tabun, and VX, a newly manufactured and highly lethal gas. These chemicals murdered at least 5,000 civilians within hours of the initial attack, and killed and maimed thousands more over the next several years. Halabja has experienced staggering rates of aggressive cancer, genetic mutation, neurological damage, and psychiatric disorders since 1988. If you walk through the streets today, you will still see many diseased and disfigured citizens.*

*Shaho was nine at the time. Within weeks, he began to suffer back pains and eventually was unable to stand or walk. 'Before the chemical attack, I was perfectly healthy... I am certain that poison gas caused my illness. My mother lost her sight at the time, and I've got gradually worse ever since.'* Shaho spends each day at home lying on his mattress, turned every thirty minutes by his devoted sister to avoid bedsores. [Gwynne Roberts, "Poisonous Weapons," *Crimes of War*, eds. Gutman and Rieff, (Singapore, 1999)].

*One citizen, Mr. Akra, was taken to a hospital in Iran before returning to Halabja to look for his family. "I saw over 200 bodies in just 100 meters. There was a terrible smell from the chemicals and the corpses. I went into the shelter. I first saw my grandmother. She had swollen up. Then I saw the blackened face of my mother and I lost consciousness."*

- Guy Dinmore, Financial Times, July 10, 2002

## Women Silenced: Saddam Hussein Acknowledges Violent Crimes Against Women

Saddam does not deny the fact that his regime tortures and brutally murders women. The daily newspaper “Babel” owned by Uday, the eldest son of Saddam Hussein, contained a public admission on February 13, 2001 of beheading women who are suspected of prostitution. The Iraqi Women’s League in Damascus, Syria describes this practice as follows.

*“Under the pretext of fighting prostitution, units of ‘Feda’iyye Saddam’, the paramilitary organization led by Uday, have beheaded in public more than two hundred women all over the country, dumping their severed heads at their families door steps. Many of the victims were innocent professional women, including some who were suspected of being dissidents. Such barbaric acts were carried out in the total absence of any proper judicial procedures, even under Iraq’s own Penal Code.” (March 3, 2001).*

### ***In Iraq, if you are a woman, you could face....***

- Beheading if you are accused of prostitution
- Rape, if you are related to someone the regime thinks is disloyal
- Torture, if you are related to a dissident



Reports show that many families have been required to display a victim’s head on their outside fence for several days. These savage practices have been used against women of all professions. For example, an obstetrician was arrested for criticizing the corruption within the health services, but was subsequently beheaded for prostitution. Another woman with a husband and three children was beheaded without charge or trial. According to Amnesty International, her husband was wanted by the security authorities because of his alleged involvement in Islamist armed

activities against the state. He managed to flee the country, but men belonging to Feda'iyye Saddam (the paramilitary unit) went to his house and found his wife, children, and mother-in-law. His wife was taken to the street and two men held her by the arms while a third pulled her head from behind and beheaded her in front of residents. The security men took the body and the head in a plastic bag and took away the children and the mother-in-law. Their fate remains unknown.

Women are often raped in order to blackmail their relatives. Men who leave Iraq and join Iraqi opposition groups regularly receive videotapes showing the rape of a female relative.

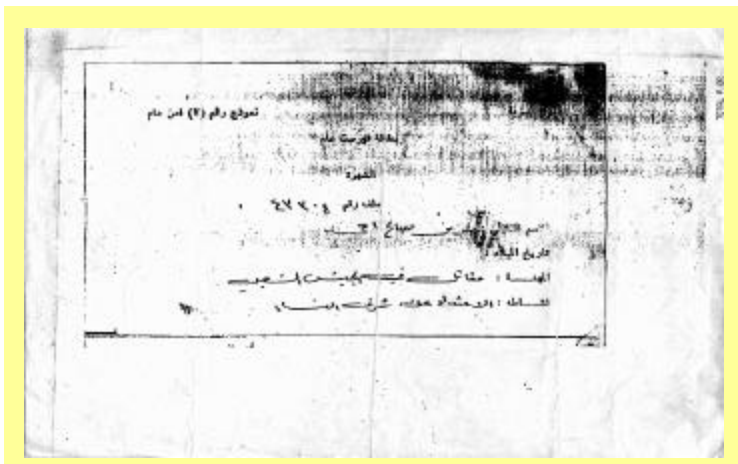
These tapes are intended to discourage Iraqi nationals abroad from engaging in opposition activities. As shown below, some authorities carry personnel cards identifying their official "activity" as the "violation of women's honor."

***Statement made by Nidal Muhyi al-Shaikh Shallal, the wife of Shaikh Shallal Muhammed al-Shallal, tribal chief of the Grai'at Jibour on October 4, 2002***

*....My brother was arrested in 1980. Since then, we have no idea what happened to him. The regime sent us a statement of his death in order to provoke us. My husband's brothers, who are also my cousins, were executed. They were Martyr Ra'ad Shallal Muhammed al'Shallal and Martyr Wa'd-Allah Muhammed al-Shallal. After that, our possessions were confiscated and we were expelled from our lands. Till now, one of our orchards has been turned into a secret factory for making chemical weapons. It is located in Grai'at (a suburb of Azamiyya in northern Iraq).*

*I was interrogated many times. It was then that my husband fled away and went into hiding. Then I was expelled from my government job. Many attempts were undertaken to have my husband arrested because of his dissent. His brothers were executed. In 1991, he participated in the Intifada (uprising), but he was captured and jailed for four months at the prison run by the Iraqi Military Intelligence. His left rib and nose were fractured as he was being tortured, and he was exposed to several electric shocks the marks of which are still visible on his body.*

*Our tribe, the Jibour tribe, has been subjected to almost total extinction. Al-Grai'at (branch of the Jibour tribe) is famous for its struggle against the Iraqi regime. As many as 882(eight hundred and eighty-two) men from among my relatives and tribal members have been arrested and their fate is unknown. The daughters of my uncle, namely Layla al-Jibouri, Fatima al-Jibouri, Tarfa al-Jibouri and Safa al-Jibouri, have all been executed.*



*Government personnel card of Aziz Saleh Ahmed, identified as a "fighter in the popular army" whose "activity" is "violation of women's honor."*

*[Courtesy of Iraq Research and Documentation Project]*

## Government Betrays Children's Welfare

Saddam has no regard for the health and welfare of the children of Iraq. Since the Gulf War alone, Saddam Hussein has built 48 lavish palaces for himself. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical supplies intended for sick children are being exported for resale overseas. Medicine and medical supplies that are desperately needed by children are frequently delayed because regime members demand bribes from suppliers. The lack of healthcare in Iraq has led to the reemergence of diseases that had been exterminated years ago, including cholera and polio.

*Kuwait authorities recently seized a shipment coming out of Iraq carrying, among other items, baby bottle, and other nursing materials for resale overseas*



In addition, the regime takes minority children hostage to force their families to relocate, thereby increasing the Sunni Arab majority in particular regions. They

also force children between the ages of 10 and 15 to attend 3-week training courses in weapons' use, hand-to-hand fighting, rappelling from helicopters, and infantry tactics. These children endure 14 hours of physical training and psychological pressure each day. Families that do not want their children to attend this rigorous training course are threatened with the loss of their food ration cards.

*[M]illions of innocent people in Iraq are suffering. Their daily life has been significantly disrupted with respect to the distribution and quality of food, pharmaceuticals and sanitation supplies, as well as the lack of clean drinking water. All of these elements have severely interfered with the functioning of basic health and education systems and have undermined the right to work.*

*- 1999 Report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iraq*

***In Saddam's Iraq, if you are a child, you could face....***

- Inadequate nutrition or medicine because the Saddam limits imports and distributes much of those to his friends and allies
- Abduction, if you are a non-Arab living in an oil-producing area
- Having to report what your parents say about the regime



Photo by Dan DeLong/P-I

## The Silent Voice of Iraqi Voters

As the world community increasingly embraces individual liberties, pluralism and representative government, Iraqi citizens do not have the right to change their government. Saddam Hussein has silenced the political opposition and has not held true elections since his rise to power in 1979. The Iraqi Constitution also provides for freedom of association. However, Iraqi law makes past, present and future associations with parties other than the Ba'th party punishable by death. He relies on his 1995 and 2002 un-democratic "referenda" to legitimize his presidency. In the most recent referendum, "confidential ballots" were marked with a number so that the government could identify the voter. There was only one name on the ballot: "Saddam Hussein – Yes or No." Citizens understood the consequences of becoming one of Saddam Hussein's "enemies." He claimed a remarkable 100 percent victory, an increase over the 99.96 percent result in 1995.

The Ba'th Arab Socialist Party  
One Arab Nation With An Eternal Message

-Decree of the Revolutionary Command Council-

Punishable by execution:

- 1- Any member of the Ba'th Arab Socialist Party who purposely conceals his previous political and party affiliations, and commitments.
- 2- Any current or former member of the Party who, under proof, is found to be linked during his membership to any other party or political [group] or of working for them and their interests.
- 3- Any current or former member of the Party who joined another party or political [group] or worked for them and their interests after terminating his relations with the Party.

I, Majid Arshad Mahmud, have been apprised of the Revolutionary Command Council's decree, and will be responsible before the law in the event that I violate the decree's provisions. Accordingly, I signed.

Name: Majid Arshad Mahmud  
Residential Address: Irbil, al-'Arab  
Work Address: Employee/Irbil hospital  
Date: 11 Jan 1979

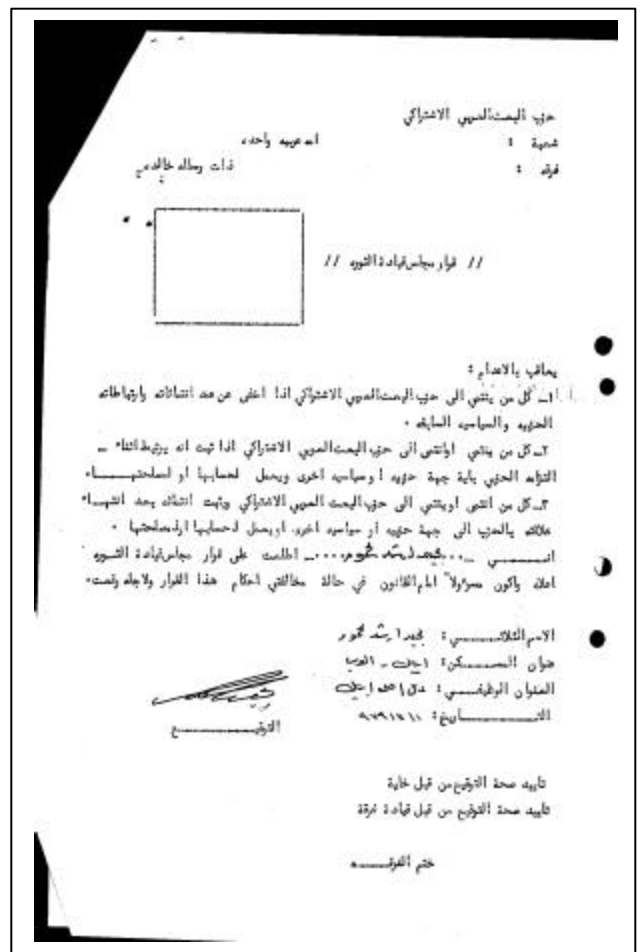
[Signature]

Confirm veracity of signature by a cell.

Confirm veracity of signature by the command of a division.

[Signature]

Stamp of the Division



This document reveals the paranoid nature of the regime in relation to Ba'th Party membership. It reflects the regime's insistence on keeping Iraqi citizens silent and supportive of its police state policy. The death penalty is given to any former or current Ba'th affiliate whose history, present and future, had, has or will have any connection outside the Ba'th Party.

Through history, Iraqi scholars have contributed to the development of political thought. Today, however, there is no political debate nor are there even articles in Iraqi newspapers that question the government. Those who have tried are now in exile or dead.

In September 1999, Hashem Hasan, a noted journalist and Baghdad University Professor, was arrested after he declined an appointment as editor of one of Uday Hussein's government-controlled publications. His fate is unknown. Press freedom is nonexistent because the government controls the media. Although the Iraqi Constitution provides for freedom of assembly, citizens of Iraq are not permitted to assemble for any purpose other than to express support for the Government. They are also not permitted to leave Iraq and travel like citizens living in free countries. Specific government authorization, expensive exit visas, and a requirement that the government must be paid collateral in order to travel are all examples of how Saddam Hussein holds Iraqi citizens hostage in a country many want to leave. Professors and journalists who are allowed to leave the country are interrogated upon their return to ensure that they are still "loyal" to the Iraqi government.

***In Saddam's Iraq, if you are an Iraqi who is Chaldean Christian, Turkmen or other ethnic minority, or if you are a member of the Shi'a majority, you could face...***

- Forced relocation if you live in an area the regime wants to control or clear
- Prohibitions on your religious study and practice
- Prohibitions on the study of your language, such as Syriac, and its use in religious practice
- No protection from mob violence
- Discrimination in school, work and government

The Iraqi Constitution also provides for freedom of religion which does not violate "morality and public order." However, freedom of religion is virtually nonexistent in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The Iraqi Shi'a community makes up approximately 60 percent of the Iraqi population, yet the Ba'th party, comprised of Sunni Arabs, controls power and has outlawed most common methods of Shi'a prayer. In many areas, Shi'a Muslims are not allowed to participate in their Friday prayers. Shi'a programs are completely banned on the government-controlled radio and television, and Shi'a prayer books and guides cannot be published in Iraq. Thousands of Shi'a writings have been prohibited throughout Iraq.

## International Community Speaks Out Against Saddam Hussein

Since 1945, the United Nations and regional organizations have come together to create a world where fundamental freedoms and human dignity are respected. For the past 20 years, Iraq has moved in the opposite direction. International law forbids torture, murder and the infliction of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment; yet Saddam Hussein has created a system flagrantly violating these international laws and parading abuses in front of the world community. Over the past 20 years, his attacks on the Iraqi people have been persistently recorded and denounced by the international community.

- The United Nations Security Council “condemns the attempts by Iraq to alter the demographic composition of the population of Kuwait. . . .”  
– UN Security Council Resolution 677 of 28 November 1990
- The United Nations Security Council “condemns the repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq . . . .”  
– UN Security Council Resolution 688 of 5 April 1991

After his 1999 trip to Iraq, Max Van Der Stoel, UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in Iraq reported the following to the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights:



“I received their testimonies, ranging from individuals who showed me their scars and wounds from torture to the hundreds of Kurdish women who held up their fingers indicating the numbers of family members who had been taken by the Iraqi authorities and subsequently disappeared”

- “the prevailing regime of systematic human rights violations is contrary to Iraq’s many international obligations . . . .”  
–UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in Iraq, 1999
- “Saddam Hussein remains a threat to stability in the Middle East . . . .He is still pursuing total control over the people of Iraq and is ready to engage in systematic repression. . . .”  
– Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair, 17 February 2001
- “The mere suggestion that someone is not a supporter of the President carries the prospect of the death penalty.”  
– Andreas Mavrommatis, U.N. Special Rapporteur, U.N. Secretary General’s Report , 2001

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 of November 8, 2002, gives Iraq another chance:

- “I urge the Iraqi leadership . . . to seize this opportunity and thereby begin to end the isolation and suffering of the Iraqi people.”  
–U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, November 8, 2002

The international community stands behind the people of Iraq. Despite Saddam Hussein’s many attempts to silence the Iraqi people, their voices and stories are being heard.