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# **The Truth About the Anfal Campaign**

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**May Allah have mercy on all the fallen martyrs of Iraq.**

## 1 Introduction

This report will treat the question of the Anfal Campaign. In a separate issue, you can find the refutation of the illegitimate historical revisionism the Bush Administration has conducted on the Halabja Attack and the true story behind it. Certain western propagandists have attempted to link Halabja to Anfal. This is not correct.

As these are two separate issues, that are not linked in any way.

The Halabja incident took place during the Iran-Iraq war, where a battle for the city took place. During the battle, the Iranian Army gassed the city of Halabja with the usage of the blood agent Hydrogen Cyanide and killed around 150 civilians. [1]

The Anfal Campaign was however a campaign that took place largely to address the insurgents in Northern Iraq that fought against the Iraqi Government during the Iran-Iraq war and to restore law and order to the area. [2]

What the world today knows about The Anfal Campaign was narrated solely by testimonies collected by the Human Rights Watch. There are no other sources, no newspaper reports, no state department briefs, nothing from the United Nations. There are no reputable sources to turn towards. [3]

There are no memoirs of journalists who witnessed the events. The event took place in 1988 where Iraq was closed for foreign visits due to the ongoing Iran-Iraq war. Iran had done the same. The HRW team did not write their report before 1992 and did not visit Iraq before 1992.

Before we dig further into the Human Rights Watch report and the Anfal Campaign we must first briefly address the parties involved.

## 2 Parties Involved

### 2.1 The Kurdish Democratic Party

The KDP, Kurdish Democratic Party under Massoud Barzani is implicated. His party came to relevance in Iraq after Abdel Karim Qassim invited his father back to Iraq after 1958. He had previously been evicted out of Iraq after he was defeated by the Iraqi Forces in 1943. At the time he fled to Iran.

His supporters were few in numbers amounting to an estimated 3000 fighters.



*Figure 2.1.* Abdel Karim Qassim with Mustafa Barzani

Upon returning to Iraq, he disbanded his agreement with Abdel Karim Qassim as he was receiving offers from elsewhere. As part of Israel's Periphery doctrine to ally and incorporate Non-Arab Muslim powers to the sphere of Israel in terms of its national security and from a military point of view.

Israel viewed Iraq as a country that posed a threat to the then newly created state. Iran, an Israel on the other hand also viewed Iraq as a threat.

The country under Abdel Karim Qassim had abandoned the Baghdad Pact and started leaning towards the Communist and USSR.

As a result the Iranians under Pahlavi founded and supported numerous groups including the KDP.

When Barzani and the KDP returned to the Kurdistan region started. Frictions started Several of the Kurdish Tribes started rebelling the Barzani Tribes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq specifically the Surchis, Zibari, and the Harkis. These were violently suppressed by Mustafa Barzani. Following up, Barzani killed Ahmad Muhammad Agha, Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji's brother and director of the Zibaris, and attacked the Harkis, Surchis, and Baradustis [4].

The connection between Israel and the KDP was established by Iran [5].

In 1961, the Iranians therefore decided to support the coming Guerrilla warfare waged by the KDP against Iraq. Funded by and armed by both Iran and Israel they continued their insurgency by numerous of attacks on civilians and other tribes who opposed them. In the 1980's when the KDP had sided with Iran and fought against Iraq. During the Iran-Iraq war KDP started allowing PKK camps inside the territory they held which resulted in numerous raids by the PKK into Turkey[6].

## **2.2 Patriotic Union of Kurdistan**

Following the 1961 Barzani revolt and the 1963 Ramadan Revolution, Mustafa Barzani signed an agreement with the new president Abdel Salam Arif. The agreement did not mention anything regarding autonomy. Therefore the Ahmad and Jalal Talabani fled to Iran alongside 4000 of his followers, and Mustafa Barzani crushed all his opponents and became the uncontested leader of the KDP [7].

After the KDP was crushed by the Iraqi Army in the 1974-1975 War, the PUK was announced and founded. Later the party would like their counterpart the KDP, start to fight alongside Iran in the Iran-Iraq war against the Iraqi Government [7].

## **2.3 National Defense Battalions**

Not all Kurds, agreed with the KDP nor PUK stance of fighting against the Iraqi Government. Many of these tribes found the KDP and PUK to be traitorous and powerhungry as seen in their previous treatment of tribes opposing their rule. Therefore several aghas (Kurdish Tribal heads) formed what is known as the Fursan or in English the National Defense Battalions.

The National Defense Battalions was compromised originally of the tribes that Barzani had murdered and killed violently many of. Later it development into an milita fighting for the

Central Government in Iraq but commanded and ruled directly by the Kurdish aghas [2].

These Pro-Government militias came to the number of about 250.000 men in 1988 and 410.000 in 1990 [2]. In comparison the KDP had around 15.000 fighters and the PUK 5.000 fighters. [1]

### 3 The Anfal Campaign

In this part we will debunk the Human Rights Watch step by step and cover the inconsistency in the report, which remains to be the one and only source to claim that a targeted ethnic cleansing program took place.

#### 3.1 The Source

The Human Rights Watch report is solely build upon verbal testimony given. None of these testimonies have been possible to verify because they only talk under the cloak of anonymity. There are no newspapers, no memoirs, no intelligence papers, no United Nations, No visitors, No journalists which have been able to proof the situation on the ground as it is. As other well documented genocides, there have been councils, excavations, briefings and more to proof that the incident took place.

The Anfal Campaign remains to be largely unrecognized by the world for this very reason. As of date, only 3 countries have recognized Anfal as a genocide. 2 of which happened led by Kurdish MP's or ministers with family ties to the KDP or the PUK. There simply is not enough proof other than the Human Rights Watch report, which is largely inconsistent.

#### 3.2 Inconsistencies in the report

As a reader reading through the Human Rights Watch report, you will notice that there are many gaps in the report. Allot of Grey areas, contradictions, errors which the conclusions are based upon.

1. In the 1993, paperback version on Page 12 it lists an estimated 182.000 disappeared. Two pages later the number is "By our estimate at least 50.000 and possibly 100.000 were killed out of hand between February and September 1988"
  - This is an largely inconsistent figures about the exaggeration starting from 50.000 all the way up to 182.000
2. On page 53 of Genocide in Iraq "The campaign against the Kurds went far beyond the six month long military campaign [the Anfal].... The machinery of genocide was set in motion ... in March 1987 and its wheels continued to turn until April 1989"
  - This is false: The Anfal Campaign starts in February 1988
  - There is no credible source to this claim.
  - Amnesty International said in 1986 there "were rumors" of relocation of Kurds. The source? Exiled KDP members. The claims were never verified. [2]
  - The infamous Pro-Iraq War Peter Galbraith visited Iraq in 1987. This is the time period the HRW alleged that an "ethnic cleansing" was ongoing. He reported no such incidents. [8]

- The source HRW lists for this is "Destruction of a Nation" by Shorsh Resool. A problematic book. Why? Because no one has it. [2].
3. On page 36: "A helpful guide to these village clearances is Resool, Destruction of a Nation. Resool's figures [are] highly reliable." See also footnote 8, chapter 1: "The Kurdish researcher Shorsh Resool, author of... (Destruction of a Nation, privately published, April 1990)."
    - This book is largely inaccessible. After years, a small part snippet of the book has surfaced on the internet indicating solely the spreadsheet with numbers and figures. No evidence nor sources are listed for these figures.
    - Academic scholars have requested the book used and the HRW have confirmed the book is inaccessible. [2]
    - The CIA said it was "plausible" in a 2002 Iraq WMD report. [9]. That term is not intelligence language and that was quickly pointed out by several analysts [10]
    - Knut Royce, a long time Washington Insider argues that the HRW claims are highly exaggerated and build on bad sources. He also states that the CIA report was modified by the Bush Administration with that term. [10]  4. On Page 46 Genocide In Iraq, they state that the 250k Fursans in 1988 were irrelevant as a fighting power and had no weapons.
    - The 250.000 number for the Fursans are correct.
    - There was not a single Kurdish Tribe that did not have Fursan (National Defense Battalion) members in it. [2]
    - Anyone that has visited Kurdistan, knows that the Kurdish males proudly bear weapons and that virtually all families more or less has weapons access [2].
    - The Fursans has fought the KDP and PUK in at least 3 wars [11]
    - The HRW uses in this chapter loaded terms like "jash" which means little donkey indicating the Fursans are traitors. This also proves their main source is KDP/PUK members [2].
  5. "Oppressed people fighting for Independence" - Page 45 Genocide of Iraq
    - The HRW directly states that the Fursans has 250.000 Kurdish Soldiers.
    - The KDP and PUK combined does not exceed 20.000.
    - The Kurdish Society is lead by tribal leaders called "Aghas". By saying there is 250.000 Fursans this means the entire Kurdish Society is Pro-Iraqi and against the KDP/PUK. Therefore contradicting to the claims they make.
  6. Page 102 - March 1988 marks the start of a great national revolt masterminded by the PUK
    - Talabani (Leader of PUK) quit fighting in 1983 and reconciled with Saddam and became governor of Sulamaniyah.
    - The Fursans hated him because of several reasons. He choose Iran over Iraq in the war. The PUK was mainly Fayli Kurds, who were Shia whom had fled to Iran when offered to choose between Citizenship in Iraq or moving to Iran. And 3rd of all, Talabani was a Marxist. The Fursans did not view them as Iraqis when they left.

- The Fursans were angry he was appointed mayor and started to kill his Lieutenants one by one [12]. Saddam was left with no choice but to cut him loose.
  - Talabani was surrounded by enemies at this point. Fursans on the left, Ba'athist in the south. KDP in the North. Only Iran would take him, while still despising him for being a Marxist.
  - Talabani would not return until March 1988 when Iran by the use of Gas took control of Halabja. Iraq didn't care about Halabja in 1988 and let it up to the Fursans. They were secretly planning their offensive on Al-Faw which succeeded.
7. Page 54 - Because of a brokered deal between Iran and the PUK, Saddam decides in 1987 to start the Anfal Operation.
- They list Anthony Cordesman as a source for the 1987 Iraqi Revolutionary Council Command Meeting for their claim.
  - Anthony Cordesman's book says the meeting was secret. He never mentions the Anfal [3] and he only speculates about what occurred at the meeting. This is incorrect usage of him as a source.
8. Simple facts cannot be established such as when did the Anfal start?
- On Page 52 the HRW state the year Anfal started is 1987.
  - On Page 92 they state 1988.
  - The same author Joost Hiltermann in another book Bureaucracy of Repression - Page 29, argues that Anfal started in 1986.
9. The author himself says he can't find evidence for Iraqi Chemical Attacks other than from KDP/PUK Sources
- The writer says he can't find "many" references to chemical attacks in the documents, and the few that he does find are not "explicit." He continues however to claim the Iraqis are conducting chemical attacks through the reference of KDP/PUK sources [13].
  - The author himself calls the Iraqi Report which mentions gas, forged. [14]
  - The same author Joost Hiltermann in another book Bureaucracy of Repression - Page 29, argues that Anfal started in 1986.
10. The Author Hiltermann says he can't find a single person in the CIA who knows anything about "Anfal"
- He spoke with CIA personnel, U.S ambassadors, DIA Intelligence officers
  - No one knew anything about "Anfal"
  - He assumed that they were under orders not to talk. When in reality, he was chasing a ghost.

Hiltermann describes interviewing a number of U.S. government officials who worked the Iraq account in the interval when the atrocities were supposedly being perpetrated (me included). He expresses bemusement that he couldn't find a single one who had ever heard of the Anfal or, for that matter, claimed to have been aware that any such operation had ever taken place. This includes U.S. ambassadors, CIA personnel, and DIA Middle East intelligence officers.

Hiltermann surmises from this that his subjects were holding out on him, that they knew but were under orders not to talk.

### 3.3 HRW Collection

As part of The Human Rights Watch report, they collected evidence. These are the three types of evidence in their collection:

- **Documentary Evidence:** In form of seized official Iraqi documents seized from the Northern Branch after the 1991 war.
- **Oral Testimonies:** These were collected in 1992, after the U.S. enforced a no fly zone over Iraq.
- **Mass Graves:** The HRW arranged to have three of these opened.

#### 3.3.1 Documentary Evidence:

We will start by reviewing the HRW interpretation of the documentary evidence. It is worth noting that none of these documents mentions the word Anfal or references it in any way whatsoever [2]. If the word Anfal is never mentioned, how can Anfal be a campaign for the "extermination of the Kurds" and the "Final Solution". The Human Rights Watch Report evidently admits this too. From page 92 this statement is made:

*Although there is no definitive evidence that the Iraqi army was yet using the word Anfal to describe its operations, this may be considered February 23, 1988 of the Anfal.*

1. In an document related to the Ba'thist wanting to form a Yazidi Sinjar militia, the HRW claims that this move is racially motivated by wanting to strip the Yazidis of their "Kurdish identity"
  - Whether or not Yazidi are Kurdish is up to huge debate. Kurdish Nationalists like to claim them, like all other nationalist to enlarge their area.
  - Most academic scholars list Yazidis as their own separate entity. In Iraq, the general view is that Yazidis are a separate entity [15].
  - In reality, the Ba'thist Government wanted to end the smuggling route between Syria and Iraq. Which were smuggling scores of PKK fighters into the country which were later cross raiding into Turkey.
2. In one report a border village is blockaded because the inhabitants refuse to relocate. The HRW claims this is ethnic cleansing. (Bureaucracy of Repression - Page 37)
  - In the Kurdistan Region, there are numerous of smugglers smuggling everything from cigarettes to humans and weapons.
  - The Government saw it therefore as a security priority. The KDP's were controlling these borders and hurting the economy and the countries security. The smuggling routes through the mountains were creative.
  - This resulted essentially in a policy where houses on the mountains were banned.

- Several of these resisted and as result no supplies was to enter their villages. This in full compliance with the cordon policy.
  - These villages were extremely small, populated at an average of around 200 inhabitants.
3. On Page 28 - The Human Rights Watch state they have 2 smoking guns in form of documents in their document caches)
- The document caches proves absolutely nothing regarding a policy of genocide [2].
  - The documents cache was retrieved by Joost Hiltermann with the assistance of Peter Galbraith (Same man who visited the Kurdistan Region in 1987 and reported nothing of genocide). The documents were then moved to Harvard University, where it is archived. The director of the archive is Kanan Makiya.
  - Kanan Makiya made the case that the Iraqis would welcome the Americans with flowers and roses.
  - Kanan Makiya later admitted there was no smoking gun:
 

*There is no smoking gun to convict Saddam of war crimes anywhere in the cache.* [16]

### 3.3.2 Oral Testimonies

Here we will examine the oral testimonies the HRW compiled.

1. HRW compiled 80 oral testimonies
  - Only three of these are attributed.
  - Instead of specifics—names, place of residence, age, and that sort of thing—identities of reporting witnesses are described only in the vaguest terms.
  - For example on page 60:
 

*Our leadership received information that the Iraqis were going to use chemical weapons,' said a PUK peshmerga who fought in the campaign.*
  - Another example on page 74:
 

*According to one man from this village army troops swept through the area populated by the Kurdish Zangalia tribe.*
  - Yet another example on page 10:
 

*"We left behind all our properties accumulated over fifty years,' added a middle aged villager from Sergalou."*
  - The most we can get of their identities is their names. This is done in the name of protecting the witnesses.
  - The International Court accepts anonymous testimonies.
  - However for this case the problem is that unlike in the Milosevic case, where there were actual UN reporters, and NGO's on the ground.



- We rely solely on the account of the KDP/PUK accounts. There are no first hand accounts of the events!

Moreover, what's to say that the peshmergas didn't coach the respondents?

According to HRW, the guerrillas arranged the interviews, that is, they supplied the interviewees, in which case they would have known in advance who was disposed to say what. In addition, the peshmergas attended the interviews, so those being interviewed knew the peshmergas had their eyes on them.

None of the HRW researchers knew Kurdish and so couldn't have known what was passing between the peshmergas and the respondents.

(Is the idea that the Kurds being interviewed could converse in English out of the question?) [2]

After 1991, In the Kurdistan Region when the Central Government lost access to it The gangs started kidnapping aid workers who had entered illicitly and holding them for ransom. By 1992, the workers had begun to flee as it wasn't safe to stay on.

The researchers' freedom of movement would of necessity have had to be impeded, to say the least. HRW says in Genocide in Iraq that a lot of the interviews were conducted in the banlieues, which would have made sense as they were located in areas that had come under guerrilla control.

But if that's the case, then the interviews represent not a consensus of Kurdish opinion but rather that of a distressed population: Kurds who were displaced by the cordon clearance operation. Indeed, some of the interviews in Bureaucracy of Repression could be read as descriptions of what went on with the clearances, not genocidal attacks. [2]

Indeed, some of the interviews in Bureaucracy of Repression could be read as descriptions of what went on with the clearances, not genocidal attacks.

### 3.3.3 Mass Graves

#### 1. Only 3 mass graves dug up until 2004

- Only three graves were dug up and 27 bodies were found. None victim of gassing.
- Most graves are found in the south!
- The HRW responds by saying that the Baathist didn't gas all their victims, they put some in concentration camps in the south

*Now this is obviously ridiculous. No such facility has ever been seen, found, recovered. Why carry the "victims" thousands of miles away? Peter Galbraith said they were bulldozed away. So this is a contradiction.*

- Most battles of the Iran-Iraq war were fought in the South and therefore these bodies are likely of origin of that.
- 300 bodies was later recovered in mass graves. They were all shot and not gassed!  
*"We left behind all our properties accumulated over fifty years,' added a middle aged villager from Sergalou."*

- Peter Galbraith and the HRW mentions after the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi Government bulldozed graves and conducted mass killings with gassing.
  - Reporters visited these areas in 1988 and reported no such incidents, no bulldozed graves, no evidence of gassing. Nothing whatsoever.
- What evidence is there the mass graves are in fact Kurdish victims?
  - Iraq has unfortunately undergone allot of violence in throughout it's modern history beginning in time of the Monarchy. Mass graves was found as early as in 1958 following Abdel Karim Qassim squashing the Mosul and Kirkuk rebellions. In addition, Iraq had a war against Iran where thousands of Iraqis were martyred and Iranians died in those Iraqi lands. Tribal warfare was also common as we discussed earlier with the Barzani massacring numerous Kurdish Tribes [4].

## 4 Conclusion

There is no evidence to such suggest that Anfal ever happened in the genocidal manner. The only evidence ever presented is the testimony of 80 Peshmergas held at gunpoint. This is a political farce and justification designed to justify war upon Iraq.

The HRW Report is designed as a lawyers brief, for a then possible coming court case against the Regime. Therefore, it needed to be persuasive. It therefore by nature, does not include material that would defend the regime.

Even in an trial by International Law, allot of the claims made would be inadmissible such as the Shorsh Resool farce or the falsley claiming Anfal started on a RCC meeting in March 1987 where they cite Anthony Cordesman book where he never stated this.

When the U.S lies about the Jihadist and Connection to 9/11 collapsed they resorted to the WMD, then the WMD lies collapsed, they resorted to the Halabja gassing, when the Halabja gassing collapsed, they resorted to Anfal. And Anfal is a lie too. It is a lie that is kept alive by people who bank on it.

They knew that people will read it and find it compelling at first glance, but by a in depth look. You can easily see that the case simply is not compelling.

Saddam was never taken to court for Halabja or Anfal. There was no sufficient evidence. Barely any country in the world recognizes Anfal. Why? Simple because there is no evidence, that an genocide happened. It was a military campaign fought by Fursans against KDP/PUK.

This is a Kurdish Civil war that was over in less than a month. The PUK and KDP had lost all power by 1988. They only resurrected in 1991 after the no fly zone was implemented.

The hostilities between the Kurds internally continued and culminated again in 1996. This time the KDP leader, Barzani called upon the help of Saddam against the PUK.

If Saddam, was Adolf Hitler with the Final Solution to the Kurds who according to his own words had killed 182.000 Kurds. Why would Barzani voluntarily invite Saddam to Erbil?

Did he not fear for his citizens safety? No. He did not. Because he knows Saddam did nothing

wrong in that aspect and that Iraq is Innocent of the baseless accusations.

HRW's executive director, Kenneth Roth—in the op-ed piece he wrote for the Wall Street Journal— said as much.

But as we saw, the evidence to which Roth had reference was insubstantial: Anthony Cordesman never said the 1987 meeting was where the Anfal was operationalized.

The Shorsh Resool book, which supposedly set forth how the gas attacks were carried out and on which communities, despite HRW's claims to the contrary, doesn't exist.

The CIA, to be sure, said that evidence was "out there" that purported to make the case for genocide, but it wasn't about to authenticate it.

In fact, the agency seems to have went out of its way to cast doubt on it.

All of this is to say that HRW didn't have the goods on Saddam that it said it had.

The only solution the HRW had was conduct forensic analysis underneath the Earth by a reputable source. This never happened and was never possible. Therefore: no bona fide victims, no crime.

The HRW was left with no choice but to drop the case against Saddam. Saddam was instead trialed for Dujail where the Government allegedly massacred 148 Dawa Members for carrying out an assassination attempt. Nothing to the scale of the "Kurdish Final Solution".

We could be writing a book about this subject of Anfal, however I will leave it up to the curious reader to study the subject. I can recommended the book the Kurdish Question by Stephen Pelletiere. I have used it extensively in this paper and summarized it's points.

The fact remains. Anfal is unproven and Saddam was never trialed for it. It is solely a myth.

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