



JUSTICE FOR IRAQI KURDS

It's time to recognise the truth

April 15 2013

Survivors commemorate 25th anniversary of Anfal genocide campaign in Iraq

April 15 2013: Yesterday, 182 Kurds stood in Trafalgar Square to mark Anfal Day, each one representing 1,000 Kurdish men, women and children who made up the 182,000 Kurds exterminated by Saddam Hussein's regime from 1986 to 1989.

Anfal Day was established in 2007 to commemorate those that died in Saddam Hussein's genocidal campaign against the Kurdish people in Iraq. Hussein referred to this campaign against the Kurds as 'Al Anfal' meaning the 'spoils of war'. In reality it was mass murder and to the Kurdish people, 'Anfal' now means genocide.

Each of the 182 Kurds in Trafalgar Square held a red rose and stood in silence to commemorate their countrymen who died in the Anfal campaign. During this time, Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime indiscriminately murdered and massacred Kurds by firing squad, aerial bombing, starvation, mass burials and chemical weapons. The largest of these operations took place on April 14th 1988, hence why the date was chosen to commemorate Anfal Day. This year marks the 25th anniversary of this notorious Al Anfal campaign.

The UK Parliament formally recognised the mass murder of Kurdish people in Iraq as genocide on February 28 2013. The decision to recognise the genocide was reached at the end of a Parliamentary debate in the main House of Commons chamber, secured by Nadhim Zahawi MP, and supported by British MPs from all political parties. Formal recognition of the genocide comes in response to a tireless campaign, supported by more than 27,600 British citizens, who have all signed a government e-petition demanding justice for the murdered Kurds. The call for recognition is supported by the recent United Nations' statement, asking for States to meet their obligations under the UN Genocide Convention to take all possible measures to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.

Yesterday, campaigners also gathered signed letters addressed to David Cameron calling on the Prime Minister and UK Government to follow up on Parliament's recognition of the genocide by doing the same. Nadhim Zahawi MP, who attended the event in Trafalgar Square, expressed his support for the recognition of the genocide by the UK Government.

Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK, Ms. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman said:

"Whilst we mark Anfal Day with the memory of those 182,000 murdered Kurds, remembrance alone is not enough. These people deserve justice. The proof of genocide is plain to see in the mass graves being uncovered in Iraq, and the victims deserve international recognition. For this reason, we are

calling on the Prime Minister and the UK Government, to follow in the UK Parliament's lead and recognise the Kurdish genocide. No one can undo the devastating suffering inflicted on the Kurdish people in the Anfal Campaign. We can however, formally recognise these events today for what they were: genocide. And in doing so, we can positively shape the future, sending a clear message to the world that genocide is recognised and will not be tolerated."

Ends

Notes to Editors:

For further information or photos, please contact Stephanie Blott or Helen Ayres at KRG@luther.co.uk or call 0207 618 9193.

Campaign website: <http://www.justice4genocide.com/index.php>

Some key facts about the genocide

- The genocide of Kurdish people in Iraq began in the 1960s and continued until the late 1980s.
- In 2006, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) estimated there being 270 mass graves in Iraq containing between 10 and 10,000 bodies in each grave.
- An estimated 180,000 Kurdish people were killed between 1987 and 1988 alone during Saddam Hussein's genocidal campaign called Anfal. The true scale of the killing from the 1960s to 1990 is not yet known.
- In the 1980s, the Kurdish population was also attacked with chemical weapons. During the most vicious assault, Saddam Hussein dropped bombs containing chemical weapons on the Kurdish city of Halabja gassing as many as 5,000 men, women and children to death indiscriminately and leaving tens of thousands of people injured. They died slowly, in unimaginable pain from chemical burns. Of those who survived, many still live with painful injuries and many children are born with birth defects.
- In 1983, 8,000 men and boys of 'battle age' from the Kurdish Barzani tribe were rounded up on trucks and vanished. The bodies are now being discovered in mass graves. From then on, men and boys as young as 13 were targeted, driven far away from their homes in trucks and executed en masse. Many victims were tied together, made to stand on the lip of pre-dug graves and shot in the back so they would fall forward into them. Others were made to lie down in pairs, sardine-style, next to mounds of fresh corpses before being killed. Some, who didn't die from gun shots were then buried alive.
- Of the total Kurdish victims, an estimated 70% were men, according to Human Rights Watch
- 90% of Kurdish villages and more than 20 small towns and cities were completely destroyed during the campaign to wipe out the Kurdish population in Iraq.
- In 1993, US-based Human Rights Watch launched an extensive investigation into the attack on the Kurds by Saddam Hussein's regime and concluded that it was genocide.
- In 2005, the court in the Hague established that the chemical bombing in Kurdistan constituted genocide in a landmark case in 2005 - the Frans Van Anraat Trial. During the Appeal, it was later referred to as 'war crimes'.
- The Iraqi High Tribunal found Sultan Hashim Ahmad, Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, and Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as Chemical Ali) guilty of genocide in 2007.
- The research institute Swiss Peace recognized the genocide in 2008.

- In 2008 the Iraqi Presidential Council approved Resolution 26 ratifying a parliamentary resolution condemning the crimes of Saddam Hussein's regime against the Kurds as acts of genocide. This resolution affirmed the previous parliamentary resolution that declared all acts committed against the Kurds in Iraqi-Kurdistan by the former regime were to be considered genocide.
- In March 2010, the Iraqi Supreme Court ruled that the 1988 attacks on the Kurdish population were indeed genocide.
- In 2012 and 2013, the Norwegian, Swedish and British Parliaments all recognised the genocide.