

# - IRAQI KURDISTAN -

## THE ANFAL CAMPAIGN

### Introduction:

Between May 26 and June 22, 1992, two EAAF's members - Luis Fondebrider and Mercedes Doretti-formed part of an international delegation which traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan to investigate human rights violations committed in 1988, against the Kurdish population by the central Iraqi government.

The mission was organized by two non-governmental American human rights organizations: Middle East Watch (MEW) and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). It was directed by American lawyer Kenneth Anderson. The scientific delegation was directed by forensic anthropologist Clyde Snow. Other participants included: American archaeologist James Briscoe; Chilean anthropologist Isabel Reveco, representing the Chilean Forensic Anthropologist team (GAF); and Stefan Schmidt, representing the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropologist Team (EGAF); American photojournalist Susan Meiselas photographed the mission. The ballistic and firearms analysis was done by American archaeologist and ballistic expert, Douglas Scott.

The forensic delegation work was divided into three parts: 1) the exhumation and analysis of 27 skeletons belonging to people executed by the Iraqi Army in August 1988, in the village of Koreme, Dohuk; 2) the exhumation of two individuals who died on the same date, victims of chemical weapons dropped by Iraqi airplanes on the village of Birjinni, Dohuk and 3) the exhumation of skeletal remains of three infants, buried in the cemetery of Jeznikam, on the outskirts of the city of Erbil.

### Historical Background:

Kurdistan is a mountainous region, that includes the north of Iraq,

the south of Turkey, north of Syria and the west of Iran. The area has abundant natural resources, with fertile lands, the Tigris river and important petroleum fields. Kurdistan is mostly inhabited by Kurds, a people of ancient Iranian descent. They speak languages from the Iranian group (sorani, kurmanji, zazai among others). The great majority of the Kurds are Sunni muslims but there are also Shi'ites, Alevi, Christians and Yezidis Kurds.

Kurds living in Kurdistan are over 20 million people, from which between 3.5 and 4 million live in Iraqi Kurdistan<sup>1</sup>. There are also around 300.000 Kurds living at the former Soviet Union, mainly in the Caucasian and Central Asia republics.

With the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the First World War, the Kurds- who were part of that Empire- started fighting for their autonomy.

In 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres, gave autonomy to the Kurds who were living in the southeast of Turkey and in Mosul Vilayet, an ancient Ottoman province which later became Iraqi Kurdistan. This treaty also created present-day Iraq. But in 1923, Ataturk, the nationalistic Turkish leader, came to power and declared he would not respect any agreements signed by the Ottomans. In 1924, the Treaty of Lausanne, signed between Turkey and the Allied governments, replaced the Treaty of Sèvres, and left Kurdistan within the domains of Turkey, Iran, France and Britain. In 1925, the League of Nations, under strong pressure from Britain,

---

<sup>1</sup> In Turkey: 12 million; in Iran, six million; in Iraq, from 3.5 to 4 million; and in Syria, from 800.000 to one million. There are also around 600.000 kurds leaving in Europe. Source: " La Question Kurde", Elizabeth Picard, Ed. Complexe, France, 1991.

ceded Mosul Vilayet to Iraq.<sup>2</sup> Along with Mosul Vilayet, present-day Irak is formed by two other ancient Ottoman provinces: Bagdad and Basora. There are three main groups represented in the country: Shi'ites Arabs (50%), Sunni Arabs (20%) and Sunni Kurds (20%).

Since 1925, the Iraqi Kurds have been in frequent rebellion, trying to gain autonomy, and have been severely repressed, first by the British and later by Iraqi regimes.

In a number of government agreements, the Iraqi Kurds were given nominal rights - as in the 1958 constitution, 1970 agreement and 1974 autonomy law unilaterally established by the central government- But these rights were not at all respected. Since 1958, the Iraq constitution and later, the documents of the Bath Party, recognized the rights of the Kurds but declared Iraq an Arab nation. "The Baathist espouse Pan-Arabism and insist that Iraq must be an Arab State. The Kurds are not Arabs. They have a distinct language, culture and history and have consistently sought more cultural and political autonomy than the Arab rulers in Bagdad have been willing to grant."<sup>3</sup>

Another point of controversy has been the location of most of the richest petroleum fields in Kurdish territory.

In September 1980, when the Iran-Iraq war started, the Iraqi central government was forced to diminish the military control in Kurdistan and started conciliatory movements towards the Iraqi Kurds. Thousands of Kurds were able to return to Iraqi Kurdistan. At the same

time, the two main political parties - the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) <sup>4</sup> - started working together in the interest of Kurdish nationalism as well as growing militarily.

### The Anfal Campaign:

The Iraqis began the "Anfal Campaign" in 1988, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

"Anfal" taken from a Koranic verse, refers to "the plunder or spoils of the infidel", and was used by the Iraqi government to give a religious justification to its attack against the Kurds of Iraq, despite the fact that the Kurds are also Muslim, and that Iraq is a secular state.

"Anfal" was a military operation, ordered by the central government, against the Kurdish population. It took place approx. from February until September 1988. <sup>5</sup> It consisted of shelling villages, some times with chemical weapons, massive disappearances, summary executions, forcible relocation and starvation of thousands of Kurds and the destruction with bulldozers and dynamite of approx. 4.000 kurdish villages. One of the most tragically famous attacks was the shelling with chemical weapons at Halabja, in Sulaimaniya province, where at least 4,000 Kurds died, victims of mustard and nerve gases.

The campaign was carried out by the Iraqi army troops, the military police and the reserve forces of a Kurdish militia created by Saddam Hussein, named National Defense

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.84.

<sup>3</sup> R. Bonner: "Always Remember", A Reporter at Large, The New Yorker, Sep., 28, 1992, P.46. USA. According to the constitution of the bath party, dated 1947, all the groups that don't share the arab nationalistic ideal within the arab country area considered as enemy, without any rights to freedom. Michel Aflak, founder of the party, thought that the problems with non-Arabs minorities should be "dissolved" with the Arab national unification; the establishment of the "Arab socialism" would rule the communities divisions. La Question Kurde, Picard, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> The Kurdish Democratic Party was founded in 1946 by Moustafa Barzani, and his area of influence are the mountains in the north of Kurdistan. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan was founded by Jabal Talabani in 1975, and his area of influence is Suleymaniye.

<sup>5</sup> : "The Anfal Campaign in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Destruction of Koreme", Middle East Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, Jan., 1993, p.1 and 6.

Battalions, or "jash." . In 1987, Saddam Hussein's nominated his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid as the absolute authority over all civilian and military offices in Kurdistan. (In 1990, Al-Majid was the governor of Kuwait and is currently the Minister of Defense for Saddam Hussein).

PHR and MEW collected testimonies which may indicate that the people who disappeared during the Anfal campaign were transported to the south executed and buried in mass graves in various locations.

In the opinion of MEW, which closely investigated this campaign, Anfal was sought to be the Final Solution to the Kurds. " It was intended. to make the Kurds of Kurdistan and their rural way of life disappear for ever".<sup>6</sup>

### **The Gulf War and its aftermath:**

On March 4 1991, taking advantage of the defeat of the Iraqi Army in the Gulf War, the Kurds started an uprising. The "pershmergas" - Kurdish guerrilla whose name means, "those who face death"- recovered control of cities and a big part of the Kurdistan territory. Inside of government buildings, they found around 20 tons of documents as well as audio and video tapes concerning information from the Iraqi military intelligence and the secret police. These contain a lot of information about the repression against the Kurds in general and, particularly, about the Anfal campaign. Some video tapes show executions, torture scenes as well as lists of political prisoners. Part of this material is at this moment in the United States, and is starting to be translated and analyzed by Middle East Watch.

But the uprising didn't last long: a month later, the Iraqi troops crushed the Kurds and painful images of Kurds migrating through the mountains towards Turkey, in the middle of the winter, were broadcast all over the world.

In April, 1992, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 688, demanding that the Iraqi government cease repression against all Iraqi minorities. Days later, Britain's Prime Minister, John Major, proposed an area - from the 36 parallel towards the north of Iraq- under the protection of the United Nations through the Gulf War Allied troops (American, French, Britain and other European countries) . The Iraqi troops cannot get into the area which is patrolled by daily flights of allied military planes, based in the Turkish border. Kurds were able to go back to their land protected by United Nations ground troops. It is uncertain, through, how long the protection will last.

### **The Koreme Case:\***

The case of Koreme was selected as an example of the Anfal campaign.

Koreme was a small town, located in a valley, facing the Zagros Mountains, about 4 km. north of the town and district capital of Mangish, in Dohuk Governorate. The Turkish border was around 50 km north from Koreme.

Ethnically, the people from Koreme were Kurdish Muslims. Around 150 families lived there. They had a school and a mosque. Electricity was installed in 1987. It was a prosperous agricultural town,

Koreme, like most of the traditional Kurdish villages, was known as a place of Kurdish resistance: they provided material support and manpower to the PDK guerrillas, who predominated in the region. Although "the "peshmerga" never had an established military base in the village or other facility that would qualify as a legitimate target in war"<sup>7</sup>, like most of Kurdish villages in Kurdistan, Koreme had been attacked several times before 1988 by the Iraqi

---

\* Note: names in this report will be avoid in order to protect the people who has given testimony and lives still in Kurdistan.

<sup>7</sup> "The Anfal campaign in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Destruction of Koreme".PHR and MEW, 1993,p.17.

---

<sup>6</sup> :Ibid. p. 7

army. In fact, in 1987, the entire town was bulldozed and dynamited.

In August 1988, when Saddam Hussein started the End of Anfal Campaign, during a cease-fire in the Iraq- Iran war, the people from Koreme were no longer living in their village but in tents and caves, in a nearby valley. However, they were still cultivating their land and most of the families were still together. The people from Chalkey, whose village had been also destroyed in 1976-77, were living an hour away by foot from them, in Hamsawa, and they were kinship related to the Koreme villagers.

According to people from Koreme and Chalkey interviewed by EAAF, around mid August 1988, a lot of Iraqi military troops arrived in the south of the area. Some villagers who went for business reasons to the Turkish border, in the north, also saw a lot of people already trying to cross over to Turkey. On August 23 and 24, Iraqi airplanes and artillery started bombing the area. In the morning of August 27, the families from Koreme and Chalkey, escaped together, walking towards the Turkish border 50 km away. They were around 250 people, bringing as many of their animals as they could. On their way, Iraqi artillery was constantly over them, forcing them to stop and hide several times. They also saw Iraqi airplanes bombing the nearby villages of Deje and Warmela. They realized these were not the usual bombs used by the Iraqi army. A white and yellow smoke came out of them and the wind shifted the smoke through the valley. Their eyes started getting red and irritated; the children started coughing, and sniffing and some of the animals died. They also met people on their way who were fleeing and were terrified by chemicals attacks in their own village. When they arrived to Warmela, one of the bombed villages, this was confirmed. They saw some 4 corpses with "most of their skin blue and burned. The skin was burned in such a way that you could see the bones"; other people were wounded, showing the same type of wounds; others were temporally blind.

The villagers told them all this was produced by the bombing.

At Warmela, the people from Koreme knew that the Iraqi soldiers had encircled the border with Turkey. They continued to Girka, another village where they found people coming back from the border who were unable to cross to Turkey. They also heard that there was going to be an amnesty for the Kurds. Scared to die under chemical attacks, artillery or Iraqi ground troops, unable to cross to Turkey and hoping that the amnesty can save them, they decided to go back to Koreme and surrender to the Iraqi soldiers.

They arrived to Koreme in the morning of August 28, 1988. Iraqi soldiers and members of the Jash were there. The Koreme villagers who were armed, turned in their arms to the soldiers. The soldiers took the animals of the villagers and put them aside.

The Iraqis separated 33 men, ranging from 13 to 39 years old and took the women, children and remaining men two hundred meters away. The soldiers told the families they were only going to ask those men a few questions and they would soon be all together again. The two groups of villagers, separated by a hill, could no longer see one another. After some minutes, they heard screaming and the sound of machine guns. The women and old men screamed and pushed the guards trying to go back and see. An old man started crying and said: "they killed our boys." But the guards did not let them pass, putting them instead into trucks and taking them to the prison of Mangish.

They stayed two days in Mangish prison, almost without food. Afterwards, they were taken to the prison of Dohuk, where they saw that thousands of Kurdish men, children and women from the entire region were also captured. Men were severely tortured and women were beaten. Again, they were given very little to eat.

One night, the guards selected the remaining young and adult men from Koreme and Chalkey and put them on a truck. These men were never seen again.

## Iraqi Kurdistan - . The Koreme case

They are part of the list of - according to Human rights sources- 60 - 80.000 Kurds who disappeared in the Anfal campaign.

After a few days, the women and children were transported to a prison in the city of Salamia, in the south; the remaining old men, were kept in Dohuk for 18 days and then were transported to the military camps named Beharke and Jeznikam, in the outskirts of the city of Erbil. Women and children joined them a few days later. The area where the two camps were located, was a plain with nothing but military control towers: no houses or tents, without food or water. They arrived at the beginning of the winter. When the villagers asked for food or blankets, the guards told them that they were there to die, not to eat.

In each of these places, they were able to survive with the help of local people who smuggled them some food, at the risk of their lives. Especially at Beharke and Jeznikam, an entire network of food and medicine supplies was organized by Kurds from Erbil which, after a while, was unofficially accepted by the guards. Nevertheless, several hundred Kurds died in Beharke and Jeznikam camps, especially infants and children, mostly from starvation, cold and epidemics that spread through the camps. During the first three hardest months, around 20 children were buried every day. They were kept in these camp for almost three years. At least 8 children under 3 years old from Koreme and Chalkey families died from cold and starvation. Six of

these children had lost their fathers, who were killed at Koreme or disappeared at Dohuk prison.

With the March 1991 uprising, the Iraqi army went south and most of the people from the camps were able to go back to the mountains.

A man of Chalkey, who lost his three sons in Koreme, told us: "You can learn and understand quickly. Since this happened, our minds got trapped into this tragedy; we can't think very well; we can't learn. Our mind is not clear anymore; we can't think of anything else".

### Survivors:

From the 33 men selected at Koreme, six survived the summary execution and were able to tell the story.

According to their testimony, there was one squad of soldiers- from several dozen to over a hundred- and around 100 militia men. The Iraqi soldiers were lead by two young Arab lieutenants. One of them separated the thirty three men aside

and ordered them to line up. Then, they told them to sit on their heels. One of the lieutenants offered them cigarettes and water, while they were assuring them that nothing was going to happened to them. At the same time, around 15 soldiers, armed with Kalishnikov AK-47 rifles, took up positions, facing the line, around 10 meters up the hill. The men started pleaded for their lives. A man started to recite Koranic verses. The lieutenant said he was waiting for orders from Mangish to know what questions he had to ask. He then spoke by walkie-talkie with Mangish and immediately



after, ordered the soldiers to shoot. After that, some soldiers fired additional *coup de grace* shots. They left the bodies there and left.

But six men were still alive. One of them was grazed in the ear and started running. Although the soldiers shot at him, he was able to escape; he was captured that same afternoon and disappeared from the Dohuk prison.

Another man, was shot in his leg and rolled down a ravine. The next day, the militia found him and asked by radio to Mangish for instructions. To his surprise, he was taken to a Mangish clinic, and later to Dohuk prison where he was taken with the other men of Koreme and Chalkey but he did not disappear.

The other four men were wounded. They waited until the soldiers left and escaped to the caves in the mountains.

From the 27 men who died in the execution line, 8 were from Chalkey and 19 were from Koreme.

#### Official Documents:

What the people from Koreme and Chalkey didn't know at the time was that this military operation was a "massive strategic envelopment of the Kurdish rural population in the regions of Zakho, Dohuk and Zawita. Documents captured by Kurdish forces from the Iraqi army in March 1991 Kurdish uprising clarify the scope of the operation. One document, "Analysis: The Operation of the End of Anfal," apparently written by staff of the Command of the Fifth Corps of the Iraqi Army, states that the "pivot principles" of the operation were "to operate from the outside toward the inside so as to encircle the saboteurs and deny them any chance to flee". Later, it describes the aim of aerial operations as "obstruction of [the Kurds] withdrawal lines toward the Turkish border." Operating from the "outside toward the inside" meant attacking from the south while simultaneously cutting off access to the Turkish border on the

north, and squeezing the population in between "<sup>8</sup>

#### Exhumations and collection of pre-mortem data at Koreme:

The bodies of the twenty seven people who were killed at Koreme remained unburied during several weeks. By then, the smell was too strong, and Iraqi soldiers or militia members, buried



Relatives of Koreme Victims at the excation site

them into two hole, containing each of them two mass graves. A few months later, a Muslim holy man asked the authorities in Mangish to properly bury the corpses. Although his request was turned down, he went with a few men to put more dirt over the bodies. In 1990, an old men who had lost his two sons in the killing at Koreme, got permission to get out of Baherke for a few days. He secretly went to Koreme and put a number of concrete bricks, around the two graves.

This man later conducted Dr. Snow in an earlier mission (winter of

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 27-28.

## Iraqi Kurdistan - . The Koreme case

1992<sup>9</sup>) to the grave site where they excavated a testing hole, in order to confirm the location of the bodies. They covered the grave again, hoping to return in spring and complete the work.

On May, 25 1992, the exhumations started. By this time, the people from Koreme were living in tents over the ruins of the towns.

The two holes were called Grave A and Grave B. Both measured 5 x 8 Mts. approx., having 2 meters between "A" and "B". Each of the two graves contained two sub-graves, which were 2 x 2 Mts. approx. The graves were divided into 1 x 1 mt. approx. squares in order to reproduce in graphics the location of each of the findings. At the same time, the excavation was recorded by photos and video.

After eleven days of work, the entire graves were dug out and twenty-seven male skeletons were exhumed. A number of bullets associated with the skeletons were also recovered. All of the bodies were dressed. In most of the cases, personal effects - such as Iraqi ID., mirrors, cigarettes in packages, little bags with tobacco, lighters, aspirins and prayer beads were recovered.

The relatives of the victims were sitting around the graves, while the excavation took place.

At the same time, one member of the delegation, helped by a local translator, interviewed relatives of all the victims in order to reconstruct the historical facts and to collect pre-mortem information (dental information, old fractures, diseases, laterality etc.) of each of the victims. This information was later used, in the laboratory analysis of the remains, to identify each of the skeletons

### Laboratory Analysis:

The remains were analyzed at the morgue of the Dohuk Hospital.

<sup>9</sup> To have more information about that mission, see "Unquiet Graves", a report from Physicians for Human Rights, 1992.



Relatives of Koreme victims observing the excavation

All of the individuals appear to "have suffered death by gunshot wounds"<sup>10</sup> From a total of 84 identified wounds, the ones distributed in the trunk (thorax and pelvis) were prevalent: 39 wounds, 46.4%; 35 wounds - 41.7 % - involved the extremities<sup>11</sup> and ten wounds (11.9%) were to the head. "The statistically significant preponderance of downward-passing bullet paths indicates that the shooters fired from a position somewhat higher than the victims...Of particular interest is the low frequency of head wounds, suggesting that the traditional *coup de grace*, in the form of a single gunshot wound to the head, was not systematically rendered in this case...In summary, the ballistic and wound evidence is consistent with the accounts given by the survivors"<sup>12</sup> All the skeletons were identified.

<sup>10</sup> Appendix 2 of "The Destruction of Koreme". Summary of Anthropological Report by Clyde Snow, Forensic Team Scientific Leader., p. 97

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 98. Some of these wounds could be compound.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid p. 98 and 99.

### Ballistic Report:

Dr. Douglas Scott, an American archaeologist and ballistic expert examined the cartridge cases found in the graves and collected from the surface in the area of the alleged execution by the forensic team. In total, he analyzed 124 cartridge cases,, 43 of which were found in a pile near an oak tree. "The firearm identification analysis indicates there were at least seven individual firearms used in the execution. The firearms were all semi-automatic or full automatic 7.62 x 39mm caliber firearms. The cases appear to have been fired in a semi automatic or full automatic gun like the AK-47. The firearm evidence strongly suggest only a single event involving the firing of over 100 rounds of 7.62 mm caliber ammunition occurred at the site" 13.

### Reburial:

One of the main concerns of the families of the victims was to see the skeletal remains while we were excavating the graves and to give them proper burial, according to Muslim religious practices. Following their instructions, once all the skeletons were identified, we put each of them into wood boxes, covered by a white linen. The men

13 Ibid. Appendix 3. Firearms Identification of the Koreme Execution Site by Douglas D. Scott, p. 103 - 106." The collection and piling of a large quantity of cases has undoubtedly disrupted the overall pattern so all conclusion presented are subject to this bias."

of the two towns put their names, a photograph, flowers and other adornments on each of the boxes. They put each of the coffins over the roof of a car in a very long caravan from the Hospital of Dohuk up to Koreme accompanied the remains to their final burial.

The were buried in the cemetery of Koreme in a massive funeral, in individual sepultures, only wrapped in white linen and with their heads facing Mecca.



Relatives of Koreme victims in the reburial ceremony

The case of Birjinni: scientific proofs of chemical attacks.

Due to a number of problems, it was not possible to exhume the bodies of the reportedly Warmela victims of the 1988 chemical attack.

Birjini was an agriculture town of 30 houses, which was attacked with chemical weapons during the End of Anfal campaign. It is located a few hours walking east from Koreme, and near Warmela, in the district of Zawita, Dohuk governorate. Although the *peshmerga* did not have a garrison in Birjinni, many of the village men were active *peshmerga* fighters in the mid-late 1980's and the the village had been bombed with artillery and aerial shelling since 1975.

The PHR/MEW located relatives of two victims who died victims as a result of chemical attack and that had been



buried a few days after the attack. The relatives wanted to exhume the bodies and rebury them properly according to Muslim religious rites. Thus, with their permission, the forensic delegation decided to work on this case.

On August 25, 1988, Iraqi airplanes bombed the town with chemical weapons. The bombs impacted in a nearby hill and immediately, a big white, black and then yellow cloud covered the sky over the town. The villagers said the bombs fell in three groups of four bombs. Four villagers died and an indeterminate number of others were wounded. After the chemical attacks, some people were able to cross to Turkey, while some others, wounded by the chemicals were unable to flee and were captured by Iraqi soldiers. They were taken to Baherke with the villagers from Koreme and Chalkey, or they disappeared in custody at Dohuk prison. Like Koreme, the entire village was bulldozed and dynamited.<sup>14</sup>

On June 1, 7 and 10 the forensic team conducted a number of different tasks in Birjinni. By that time, the people from Birjinni were living as refugees in a collective town near Dohuk highway and going up to the mountains to begin replanting the crops and the orchards for a few days at a time. They were with us the days we worked in the town.

The forensic mission exhumed two graves in an orchard, each one containing one person, separated from each other by a meter approx. The remains belonged to an approx. 60 years old man and an approx. five years old child, who were buried in an orchard. According to the villagers, the man was the grandfather of the child and they were both caught in the chemical cloud of smoke in the nearby cultivated fields. The relatives of these persons recognized them by their clothing and personal belongings. The forensic team examined

briefly the remains just to see if any peri-mortem trauma or any other wound was found who could set doubts concerning the testimony of the villagers. No peri-mortem trauma was found in the bones or any other indication inconsistent with the testimony of the villagers.

After the remains were exhumed and samples of dirt in contact with the bones, cloth and bones were collected, the families buried them in the cemetery of the village.

Other members of the forensic team examined three clusters of four airborne canisters, each space around the edge of the village terrace, 700 meters away from the village. Four bomb craters were examined in detail: they were evenly spaced on a straight line thirty meters apart and may have been dropped from low altitude, on a line consistent with the survivor reports of aircraft direction. The craters consisted of low conical depressions 2.2 meters across and 0.6 to 1.2 meters deep. Fragments of the bombs were found lying immediately besides and in the craters. In two instances they consisted of an iron outer envelope that was heavily rusted, an aluminum inner canister, a heavy lid labeled "Top" in English, a spout in the lid, and twisted tail fins. Soil samples were collected from the craters and scraped from the inside canister.

The samples were sent initially to the Department of Chemical Pathology, at the University of Leeds, in the United Kingdom but were finally analyzed by British Ministry of Defense Chemical and Biological Defense Establishment.

On April 29, 1993, it was publicly announced that the samples coming from the bomb craters contain mustard gas and nerve agent residues.

" This is the first time that the use of chemical weapons has been proved through the analysis of chemicals residues after the attack. It is particularly striking given that the attacks took place in 1988, and the site was unprotected from sun, rain and snow. The finding has significance not only for showing what human rights atrocities

---

<sup>14</sup> PHR conducted a mission in 1988 to the Kurdish refugee camps in Turkey. They interviewed people from Birjinni and their accounts are consistent with the ones collected four years later by the current mission.

took place in Iraqi Kurdistan but also for verification measures under the Chemical Weapons Convention and other arms control treaties"<sup>15</sup>

No results have been obtained from the analysis of the bones, cloth and soil related with the skeletons. But further analysis remains to be done.

### Three cases at the cemetery of Jeznikam

Between June 18 and 20, 1992, the forensic delegation worked at the cemetery of Jeznikam where, reportedly, many of the Kurds who died in Beharke and Jeznikam camps were buried. .

The objective of the investigation was to determine whether archaeological evidence at the gravesite and evidence gathered from skeletal remains was consistent with the accounts given by Koreme villagers.

For these purposes three exhumations were done, one corresponding to a year- old infant, who according to her relatives, died of starvation in Beharke camp after being forcible relocated from Koreme. Each of the three graves exhumed contained an infant female; two of the three showed signs of severe malnutrition and/or disease stress.

In the one corresponding to the infant of a Koreme family, forensic examination showed that she has been about seven months old, according to dentition, but only one to three months old according to bone development.

"The difference in age determination between dentition and skeleton is evidence of malnutrition and/or disease, because typically dentition develops normally while skeletal growth is severely retarded in the case of malnutrition or disease"<sup>16</sup>

In addition, a sample inventory of graves was done. The Jeznikam cemetery

has two sections: an old one, related with a former Kurdish village who was destroyed by the Iraqi army in 1987 and a newer one, alleged to contain the remains of the villagers who died in Beharke and Jeznikam camps. The sample inventory was done in the following way: 166 graves- representing around a 20% of the total number of graves of both sections of the cemetery- were measured from head to foot in order to establish the ratio between adult and subadult graves in each section. The results showed that, even taking into account the disappearance of many adult men prior to their arrival to these camps- there was a disproportionate number of death among the children of detainees. The ratio of subadult to adult graves in the detainee sector is about five subadult graves for each adult grave; the ratio of subadult to adult graves in the old sector, represents a " normal" distribution, being one subadult grave to two adult graves. Therefore, it is evident that the children suffered especially heavy in detention <sup>17</sup>.

The forensic team considered the findings to be consistent with the information provided by the survivors about the living condition at the camp around Erbil city.

---

<sup>15</sup> Memorandum at the press conference by PHR and the Arms Project of Human Rights Watch, April 29, 1993, Washington, D.C.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p.69.

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p. 65 -70 and 92-96.