

Wednesday 7 Mordad 1388

Someone who survived Kahrizak in interview with Rooz

In Kahrizak We Licked Water

Majed, A. is one of those arrested on June 9th. In an interview with Rooz, this twenty something student tells of the horrible conditions of Kahrizak Prison.

When and where were you detained?

Crossing of N. Eskandari and Enghelab Street. Exactly in front of BRT Gharib station at 6:30.

How were you detained?

I was going toward Enghelab to go to University Dormitories with one of my friends. There were a lot of noise and traffic and we wanted to get to the place we intended as soon as possible. We saw that the Special Forces were attacking people and in order to by pass them we used side streets. The plainclothes men and the basijis were there too and were ever more dangerous. So we decided to go back to Enghelab Street. There was a lot of altercation the Eskandari Crossing. We joined the people and tried for an hour to get through the officers and join the green movement people.

Were you chanting slogans or throwing stones?

Yes, everyone was doing them. What else could we do to battle batons and bullets? No one was there who didn't throw stones or chant. The girls brought us stones from the side streets and were acting like our support teams. The families who lived there were making drinks for the protestors and give them water.

Were you recognized?

No. I was caught in a sudden and surprising attack. While we were battling the Special Forces, the plainclothes bikes sped into Enghelab Street from S. Eskandari Street and blocked our exit from behind and arrest us. There was no chance for others to inform us of this beforehand.

How many people were arrested?

When they threw the tear gases they arrested 10-12 people from amongst us. When we inhaled the gas we could not do anything else. The gaseous mix of the tear gas canisters [used by the guards] is different than plain tear gas and as soon as one inhales it, one feels limp and lifeless. The mix includes COS and when it enters the body, it caused the person to lose the ability to act or make decisions and thus, fall prey quickly.

What happened after being detained in Enghelab Street?

Right there and while detaining us, they beat us heavily. So, while we could not really move (due to having inhaled the tear gas) 6-7 people ganged up on us and started the beating. They used electrical batons and fists and kicks and we had no power to defend ourselves.

Were your friend detained too?

No. when the masses were cut off by the forces he had went back to help those affected by the tear gas.

So they took you to detention center?

Yes, to the Commanding Office of the NAJA in S. Kargar Street.

How many of you guys were there?

A lot, around 50 people.

Did they beat you there too?

Yes.

How long did they keep you there?

Until passed midnight. I think it was around 4 am when they moved us to relocate us to a place that we later realized was Kahrizak.

Did they take everyone to Kahrizak?

Yes, with one or two busses. They chained our hands and legs, blindfolded us and put us on the bus.

Tell me about the conditions in Kahrizak.

When we got there, first they beat us heavily. I think it was around 6 am when 13 to 14 of them ganged up on us and started beating us and calling us awful names. They beat everyone with electric baton. Then they stripped us naked and splashed us with water and attacked us with cables and chains. At that time, most of us were effectively lifeless due to sleep deprivation and physical pain. We had no fight left in us. Once we were dealt this way in Kahrizak, we didn't even have the power to get up.

Why did they beat you?

No reason. They cursed us and call us Monafigh, Ashghal and a thousand other curses that I cannot mention now.

What did they look like?

Pretty normal. They dressed like normal people. Some of them even wore jeans. Some had bear and mustache and some didn't. I mean they weren't any particular way. But one could tell based on their angry looks and their violent behavior that they get paid well or that they have been brainwashed well, or both.

What was the condition of the place you were kept?

Disastrous! They had built warehouses that were extremely damp, where the smell of humidity really bothered us. There are many containers in each warehouse that are built to keep 5 people each. However, they dump all of us in the five person capacity container. There were at least 20 people in one container. Hygiene is non existence there. The detention center is in the middle of barren land and it gets really hot inside it. There is not enough air circulation for everyone to breath properly and so a lot of people got sick.

What did you do when you needed to use a bathroom?

They would chain us; all 20 at one time, and take us to the bathroom. Sometimes there would be no bathroom break and so all the containers stunk terribly.

What was the food condition like?

They didn't give us anything for 48 hours and after that, they only gave us bread, old stale Lavash. The hardest part was that we didn't have water. They would splash water into the container from underneath the door and we had to lick it up. We prepared an area that was not stepped on a lot for water to collect there. But the next day, even that area was sullied and after the next beating, it became dirty.

So you mean the whole time you were there you only ate bread?

No, sometimes they gave us milk too, but I was heavily diluted. Sometimes they gave potatoes as well.

What did they want from you?

Nothing, they only beat us a few times a day. Sometimes they would even come at night and do it.

What did you do they rest of the day?

Nothing. Day to day we were in those dirty so called cells. There was no room and we could barely move. We were all blood smeared too. There were no covers or pillows to sleep with. The prisoners slept on each others legs.

How many times were you let out during the day to get fresh air?

As I said, they never took us out. The room was really small and the numbers very high. There was only one small opening in the high ceiling of the place where light would shine in, based on which we knew what time it was.

Were there other forms of torture too?

Yes, plenty were hung for long hours. A large number were only beaten which was the easiest to deal with. Some were kept in the solitary cells. Some had their hands and feet burned with molten tar. many of the detainees had their teeth broken in this period. Most of the people who went to Kahrizak dont have healthy teeth. The young ones were taken to the gallows to be hung, the noose was placed around their neck but they were brought back down again. The kids were mortified and all the while the guards would beat them and call them all kind of despicable names. The stronger prisoners were even deprived from the little food provided. They stayed in the containers most of the time. also, the guards had let loose a few mice inside the warehouse and ...

And what? Was there rape involved too?

Unfortunately this was the worse part of the tortures. They raped those who were younger and quieter than others. We could hear their screams.

Did you see it yourself?

Yes. Three of my cellmates had this happen to them. all three were under the age of 22. they were taken [to be raped] once daily. Of course, after the rape, they were injected with some medicine so that they can rest.

Do you have any news of them?

Yes they were released.

Was anyone killed?

Yes, from the other rooms but not from amongst people in our room. Many of the people whose death is being announced now died a long time ago. I mean, a few days pass between their death and their family being informed.

Why?

In order for time to pass between when they were arrested [and their death] and so they can say that this person was in detention and didn't die under torture. This is while the tortures were so severe that many of the dead died within those first days.

What did they tell you when you were released?

Nothing. They made us give a guarantee. Then they took our pictures, our fingerprints and details about our family members, where we live and who our primary family members are. Then they released us.

How is your physical condition now?

I am being treated. My rib cage is fractured on the right side of my body and my teeth are broken too. My left ear has lost some of the hearing. But over all, I am fine. I am alive.

Will you continue to demonstrate?

Of course! I am preparing myself for three demonstrations. One is Neda Agah Soltan's fortieth, one is President's approval ceremony and one is his swearing in.

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