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Kejal Abdouli Testifies Before Congressional Human Rights Caucus

June 10, 1995

Statement of Ms. Kejal Abdouli wife of Mr. Fatah Abdouli one of the victims of the Mykonos Restaurant

[Editor's note: On June 10, 1997, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a hearing on the state-sponsored terrorism by Iran. The following is the testimony of Mrs. Kejal Abdouli who lost her husband in Mykonos Restaurant in Berlin, Germany.]

Mr. Chairman/Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are gathered here today not only to denounce terrorism, rampant throughout the world, and to remember all those who fell under its blind or willful blows, but also to look for solutions to put an end to this means of expression, undoubtedly the most cowardly and revolting one can think of.

If I am standing here before you, it is because I am indirect but a broken hearted victim of terrorism, and if I could strengthen your determination of fighting terrorism by giving you my testimony, it would make me feel happy and useful.

My name is Kejal; I am the widow of Fattah Abdouli, who was the representative in Paris of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, and who, together with the Secretary-general of our party, Dr. Said Sharafkandi, and two other comrades, were assassinated on 17 September 1992 in Berlin's Mykonos Restaurant, barely a few hours after they had attended the Congress of the Socialist International that was being held on that city.

You may ask yourselves "why them"? or "why in a foreign country, so far away from Kurdistan, the need to fight the leaders of the Kurdish people?"

The answer is simple: for many decades, the Kurds have been fighting to be granted their most fundamental rights and suffering multiple repression and persecution. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular, never hid its hatred for the Kurdish people and its leading political formation, the democratic party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI). The Iranian regime has repeatedly and openly said that it would do everything possible to physically eliminate all KDPI leaders, wherever they might be, in order to put a final end to the existence of this party.

Why this relentless pursuit? What crimes has the KDPI committed to deserve such persecution?

Here again, the answer is simple: our party clearly voiced the claims of the Kurdish people who, like all the peoples of the world, aspire to freedom. The KDPI also maintains that the only way to reach that objective is through the establishment of democracy in Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan. At the end of the 20th century, don't you think these are natural and justified demands?

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However, inside the Islamic Republic, "willing to live" is tantamount to "willing to die", and what the mullahs call "freedom" is nothing but a uniform way of life imposed on all the country's citizens. Recently, elections were held in Iran; a so called liberal and moderate mullah was elected president. Don't be mistaken: a mere change of person at the head of the state will not be able to modify the situation inside the country nor influence Iran's foreign policy. And please mark my words: as long as no solution is found to the Kurdish issue in Iran, terrorism will remain thriving.

Of course part of Iranian behavior is related to western tolerance of it. I ask myself what are the results of all these meetings and seminars? Are there any serious international reactions? For how long will the international community avoid the truth? Why is the response of Western public opinion is silence? What steps have they taken to fight terrorism on their soil? How long will the blood of the innocent be sacrificed for the sake of economic interests? For how long the lives of Kasemlous, Sharafkandis, Abdoulis, Kaderis, Ardalans and the rest of freedom fighters, because they are Kurds and seek freedom for their people even in foreign lands, are not spared? Maybe if it were not for the result of the Mykonos trial, still there would have been doubts about Iranian involvement in terrorism.

Friends,

As a member of the families of victims, I expect the international terrorism be stopped at least in those countries which adhere to democratic principles.

Let us come back to my personal case. I believe that those who are killed by the assassins' bullets are not the sole victims of terrorism. It is true that they lose their most precious possession, LIFE, but when they leave this world, they also leave other victims behind, the survivors and witnesses of the bloody nightmare.

As long as I live, I will never forget that night of September 1992. I had been in Paris for a year and a half, together with our baby son, and I still felt like a stranger in an unknown country. In the middle of the night, I was awakened by the strident ring of the telephone-and then I was told that the person I loved most, my husband, my companion in happiness and misfortune, was gone, never to come back.

I don't know whether you can grasp the horror of what happened next. I had to wake my four-year-old son, the only loved one left to me, and unable to control the pain I left, I cried out to him that his father, his favorite hero, whom he waited for so impatiently every evening, standing behind the door and listening for the sound of the elevator, eager to throw his arms around his neck, was gone forever.

I was in a foreign country without any family or relatives to share my grief or hear my cries of pain, and I thought there was no more place for me in this world, that I didn't have the right to go on living. I had only one wish: to be reunited with my husband in death. But the little boy who was clinging to me, the meaning of my husbands life-long fight and the thought of his many friends who are still fighting for our freedom brought me back to my senses. I told myself I had to go on in order to bear witness whenever and wherever I could and to denounce terrorism relentlessly.

Mr. Chairman/ Ladies and Gentleman,

You will understand that it is very difficult for me to tell you all that I felt and went through at the moment and afterwards. Feelings so deep and intimate that they cannot possibly be put on a piece of paper. The loss of one's dearest beloved inflicts a wound so deep that it never really heals - even when it may seem so to the outside world. Memories come back, obsessively, and constantly pull you back into the past.

Each morning, one has to take a fresh heart and push oneself to keep fighting, for fear of seeing terrorism crowd over its continuing victories and rejoice in the death of freedom.

The other day, my nine year old son asked me: "How was it possible for my father one of the heroes of our people, to be killed so easily?" I told him: "Listen carefully: your father and his friends were peace, justice and democracy-loving Kurds. But their enemies did not acknowledge that they had the right to live; like cowards, they hid in the dark and lay in wait for their victims, killing them when they least expected it."

And then I added: "Human beings must learn to love and respect one another. But as long as we Kurds will not be allowed to live and breath in freedom, as long as we will not be granted our fundamental rights and our cultural and political identity, we will go on fighting".

Long Live Kurdistan!