



Witness Statement of Eghbal Moradi

Name: Eghbal Moradi
Place of Birth: Marivan, Iran
Date of Birth: September 1st, 1961
Occupation: Activist

Interviewing Organization: Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC)

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Interviewer: IHRDC Staff

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The views and opinions of the witness expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

Statement

Background:

1. I am Eghbal Moradi. At the moment I reside in Iraqi Kurdistan. I have been working with Kurdish political parties for 33 years. I am also the father of Zanyar Moradi, who is currently a political prisoner sentenced to death in Iran. In the past I was one of the officials of the Komala movement. During my time with the Komala I was an armed member, but I resigned from the organization and since then I have not been involved in any armed activity.
2. I heard the news of Zanyar's arrest 10 to 15 days after I was attacked by a terrorist group affiliated with the Islamic Republic within the borders of Iraq. I was wounded severely by the attack. The government of the Islamic Republic itself tried to assassinate me with the help of terrorist groups it had in Iraqi Kurdistan. Since they were not successful in their attack, I knew that they would somehow hurt my family in order to retaliate out of fear that I would take some action against the terrorists they had sent to kill me. Unfortunately, Zanyar was with my parents in Iran at the time, and 10 to 15 days after I was wounded Zanyar was arrested by the Intelligence Ministry Office in Sanandaj. So far two of the terrorists who were sent by the government of Iran to Iraqi Kurdistan to assassinate me and my family have come to me and very candidly admitted that "they [the government] sent us." These two individuals have also provided documentary evidence of their agreements to kill me. I have sent one of them back to Iran, but it is somewhat problematic to talk about the second one's location because he has been arrested and is currently being held by one of the Kurdish political parties.

Eghbal's Political Activism:

3. I have been cooperating with the Komeleh since the Iranian Revolution 33 years ago. In Kurdistan [the Iranian province] right now many young people are attracted to political parties, and this was especially quite common at the beginning of the Revolution, when my political involvement with the Komeleh began. Due to this involvement, I was imprisoned by the Islamic Republic for 5 or 6 years in Sanandaj, Orumiyeh, and Marivan. Most of my friends in those prisons got killed during that time. In those days our work was political; we were simply publicizing our political positions in Iranian Kurdistan, whether they be nationalist or generally critical of the Islamic Republic. We also shed light on the government's brutal behavior in Iranian Kurdistan.
4. I was arrested in Sanandaj, where I was a student at the time. After I had been in prison for 5 or 6 years without being charged, Khomeini announced a public amnesty and fortunately I was one of those amnestied, otherwise I would have been executed. There were about 13 or 14 of us and we were all from Marivan.

5. I was in captivity for 5 or 6 years in Orumiyeh, Sanandaj, Marivan, and Tabriz. Thereafter I was exiled to Shahr Reza in Isfahan, where I lived in exile for another 6 years.
6. I left Iran illegally in 2000. By then I was under frequent investigation and interrogation. Since I was under regular suspicion, I didn't feel safe, so I decided that I had to come to Iraq. Iraq was relatively more secure and free, [the Kurdish region] was managed by the Kurds themselves, and they conducted their political activities there openly. Because of these differences I decided to go to Iraq with my family.
7. My activities since my departure from Iran have been more political than military in nature. In Iraqi Kurdistan the political parties don't engage in military activity due to pressure from Iraqi Kurdistan's neighbors, thus my activities were limited to conducting interviews and reading books. That is true for all members of Kurdish parties living in exile.
8. I no longer work with Komala or any other political party. I've left them for my own reasons-- partly because of Zanyar's status and also because of some ideological disagreements that I've had with my friends.
9. The assassination attempt against me occurred 15 or 20 days before Zanyar's arrest. I was severely wounded by nine bullets to my back. I can identify the culprits well, as can the regime in Iran. They even called me from the Intelligence Ministry and threatened that they would send more people to try to kill me. I responded that I knew what they were doing by mentioning the names and other identifying information about the assassins they had sent thus far. At first I thought that the regime had arrested Zanyar because they were afraid that I might take some action against the assassin that they had sent. Nine months after his arrest, however, Zanyar's jailers accused him of the murder of the son of the Friday prayer leader of Sanandaj. Two more assassins were sent to kill me but they came forward and confessed. They told me that they had been in prison when they were told to come and kill me. The authorities evidently ordered the assassins to kill me and my family. I know the identities of the assassins. The authorities in Iran had given them money to come to Iraqi Kurdistan. The one who shot me had been given 60 million Tomans. The other two came forward and confessed that they had been sent to assassinate me. They provided me with the documents that they had been given by the authorities in connection with their assignments. They were honest and so I wasn't very hard on them.
10. The assassination attempt took place in Iraq. Someone called my name and when I turned around I was a hit in the back by a bullet from a gun with a silencer. When I stood up, I was shot again. He shot me a total of nine times in the back, and even now the remnants of one of the bullets are lodged in my heart. None of the doctors in Iraqi Kurdistan have been able to extract it.

Zanyar's Activities:

11. Zanyar was a student and after his studies he tried to make some money by purchasing smuggled goods such as tea, soap, oil, and gasoline in the border areas and selling them in the city.

12. He came to Iraq because of me. We lived in the Komala camp in Iraqi Kurdistan, where he was a member of the peshmerga (militia of a Kurdish party) for a time. He didn't come to the camp because he was attracted to the party's political agenda; he was just there to be with me. After awhile he couldn't remain within the camp because he had to go back to Iran to assist my aging parents. When he returned to Iran, Zanyar surrendered himself to the authorities. He was given a 3 year suspended sentence and had been told that if he ever repeated the actions implied in the charges against him, or committed any other counter-revolutionary [anti-government] actions, he would be sent back to prison. Zanyar was never an armed militia member; in Iraqi Kurdistan almost everybody has a gun, but within the Komala camp itself nobody was armed at that time.
13. For a while Zanyar worked and lived with my parents. Unfortunately, after the failed assassination attempt against me, the authorities arrested him. He was not involved in any military activity, as is the case for all peshmerga members in Iraqi Kurdistan. Zanyar had only come to the Komala camp in Iraq to live with me.

Zanyar's Arrest:

14. I have no news regarding Zanyar's arrest and continued detention beyond what the news media has mentioned. In fact I first learned of his arrest from the news media. Since I was in the hospital for my injuries at the time, the telephones, especially the telephones of my family members and relatives, were under strict surveillance by the authorities in Iran. No one in my family received news regarding Zanyar's arrest and detention from Zanyar himself or from the authorities until two or three months into his detention, at which point Zanyar managed to contact my father through a prison guard and let them know that he was in prison.
15. Three or four people from the information bureau of the Intelligence Ministry Office in Marivan arrested Zanyar when he was alone in my father's house. They had secured a warrant for his arrest because they already had a file on him in relation to his previous political offenses. He had been interrogated a few times by the Intelligence Ministry Office during which he had been asked about my current activities, but he told them that he had no contact with me. Before he was arrested I knew that the authorities would create problems for him and had asked my parents to send him to us however they could, but when I was in the hospital recovering from my wounds, I learned of his arrest.
16. Zanyar has been in prison for around 30 months now. We have not received any information from the authorities regarding visitation or telephone contact since his arrest. My parents have been able to visit him briefly just one or two times.
17. Zanyar has managed to pass along a letter outlining his situation. The letter specifies that he was arrested by the Sanandaj Office of the Intelligence Ministry. If the letter hadn't contained this information, we would have no way of knowing what organization was responsible for his arrest, since he has not been allowed to have visitors. In his letter, he acknowledged that he was arrested by the local Intelligence Office in Marivan. Consequently we determined that the Intelligence Ministry Office in Sanandaj arrested him.

18. According to the contact they [Eghbal's parents] had with him [Zanyar] in prison he avowed his willingness to be tried in a fair court with journalists present. He does not admit to any of the accusations made by Islamic Republic.

The Charges Against Zanyar

19. Zanyar has only been victimized because I am his father. I have been cooperating with one of the political parties here in Iraqi Kurdistan. Since I became a member of that party, I have had to live in their camp. Of course, I was not forced to become a member--I felt that it was my duty. Zanyar simply came to Iraqi Kurdistan to see his father, so his real crime is that he is related to me. They have accused him of being a member of Komala, but I was a member, not him. Perhaps it is natural that one gets accused of being an armed member of a militia when he lives in that militia's camp, but he had no connection whatsoever with such activities, He was only in the camp in a personal capacity.
20. The accusation against Zanyar is that he was connected to the assassination of the son of the local Friday prayer leader's son. The authorities have accused Zanyar and two other people in connection with this crime, but the accusations are baseless. The family of the victim and the people of Marivan know that the accusations against Zanyar are baseless and unfair. This series of assassinations in Marivan were conducted by the Islamic Republic itself. The reason for this is clear. For a time a criminal band affiliated to the Intelligence Ministry and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was operating in Marivan (including Hamid Khoshnavaz and Moslem Rashidi). It is unclear whether they have been arrested, but they are not present in Marivan at the moment. Since the beginning of their absence, no one has been assassinated, whereas before one or two people were assassinated every night or every week until the public realized that the people who were affiliated to the IRGC were the actual culprits behind the assassinations. The authorities have arrested Zanyar and his alleged co-conspirators to cover up the scandal generated by this group of terrorists. According to documents in our possession, an estimated 100 to 120 people living in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iranian Kurdistan have been killed in this fashion. The people behind these assassinations were major government officials and affiliates of the Intelligence Ministry of the Islamic Republic. These individuals had complete license from the Intelligence Ministry to carry out these assassinations. Since the authorities were afraid of the emergence of a scandal, they arrested two kids in order to blame them for the murders. Zanyar was under 18 when he was arrested. Zanyar and Loghman Moradi, the other boy that was arrested, can't prove anything, since they were uninformed of the whole situation [sic]. They were a part of the scenario that the government itself had designed in order to create the illusion that it had enemies, but the public knows that the IRGC and Intelligence Ministry affiliates are the real murderers.
21. Some documents and even some of the families of those people who have been assassinated in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan by IRGC forces can confirm this. The estimated 500,000 to 600,000 people of Marivan can also testify. Even the Friday prayer leader (imam) knows that this has been of the government's own creation. During one of his sermons, the imam himself claimed that he was aware who was behind the murder of his son. While this is all that he explicitly said, [I

believe] that the implication was that his son's murderers were agents of the Intelligence Ministry.

22. I know 30 or 40 families of people who have been assassinated by the Intelligence Ministry.
23. They have brought this accusation against him after holding him in a prison cell for nine months. As he wrote in his letter, he has been harassed and persecuted throughout his imprisonment. They interrogated him violently, and most of the questions were about me. They told him that they wanted his father and that as long as I did not come back, they would continue torturing him and his friend.
24. Through some of Zanyar's friends in prison, we have learned that he is gravely ill and his health problems have mostly been caused by the torture inflicted upon him in prison.
25. He has an attorney named Hassan Paydar, but unfortunately Mr. Paydar has not been able to do anything significant for Zanyar.
26. The date of his execution has not been announced yet. The judge sentenced him to death at his last trial, but has not set a date.