



Witness Statement of Soma Kamangar

Name: Soma Kamangar
Place of Birth: Sanandaj, Iran
Date of Birth: 15 April 1979
Occupation: University Student

Interviewing Organization: Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC)

Date of Interview: February 14, 2011

Interviewer: IHRDC Staff

This statement was prepared pursuant to an interview with Soma Kamangar. It was approved by Soma Kamangar on February 14, 2011. There are 8 paragraphs in the statement.

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

Statement

1. My name is Soma Kamangar. I am 31 years old and a university student in Sweden. I left Iran in 1993 and came to Sweden so that I could be with my mother. I am a Kurd from the city of Sanandaj.
2. In 1989, the Islamic Republic [of Iran] assassinated my father Sedigh Kamangar in Iraq. He was one of the leaders of the Komala Party and was assassinated in Komala's central camp. My father started his political activities when he was a student. He studied law, became an attorney and had a law office in Sanandaj. Along with his friends, he formed the Komala Party and was forced to leave Iran after the revolution. Komala's camp was in Iraqi Kurdistan and his main activities were centered there. Until he was assassinated, he spent his entire time at this camp.
3. I was three years old when I was arrested in my paternal aunt's house in Karaj along with my two aunts, my aunt's husband and son. We were taken to the detention center. When I was little, my mother had used the house in Karaj as a hideout for a period of time. Two years passed and we had since returned to Kurdistan but someone informed the authorities that we were hiding here. At that time, my one aunt and I were visiting my other aunt. We were arrested accidentally.
4. I was in prison for nine months. If I am not mistaken, we were taken to the Komiteh prison in Tehran. At first, we were in the ward. They took my other aunt, her husband, and their son to another location and we did not know where they were. At the time I did not speak any Farsi and only knew Kurdish. Whenever they took my aunt away for interrogation, I became very scared. I was alone and terrified and the other prisoners consoled me. They told me that when my aunt was gone I should look at them like they were my mothers. I gradually learned Farsi and forgot Kurdish. There was a woman in the ward who delivered her baby during that time. [The prison guards] brought my cousin, who was one year older than me to me, so that we could play together. We played between the wards. There were two other children named Maryam and Mohsen.
5. Sometimes, we were allowed to go outside of the ward and we went to the corridors that housed the cells from one end to another. The prisoners who had been tortured were in those cells. We would bring them water from the bathroom because they could not do so themselves because they were not allowed to leave their cells. There was a man among the prisoners whom we liked very much. At one point it was mentioned that his execution order was issued and is on a table in one of the rooms. My cousin and I stole the execution order because we thought that if there were no paper order, they would not execute the man. However, [our fellow cell mates] told us to put it back otherwise, things could get ugly.
6. After a period of about nine months, my aunt was released and I was released along with her. My other aunt was released afterwards. At that point, my aunt did not want to stay in Karaj any longer. During that time, I lived with my grandparents. Later, they were exiled to the city of Taft in Yazd province and I went along.¹ We were there for about a year and then returned to Sanandaj.
7. Right after the revolution, my grandfather and the aunt that I lived with in Karaj were arrested. When my family went for visitation with them, my grandfather's sisters and the other family members were arrested and imprisoned for 3-4 days as well. Later, they were all released. Once, they took three of

¹ In order to dilute the power of perceived political opposition, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been known to banish, or forcibly displace, key political opposition figures, their families and associates to remote towns or provinces within Iran's border limits where their access to political gatherings is limited. For further examples, see: <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/news/features/3428-freedom-of-movement.html?p=3#.UGHGOrKPXNo>

my aunts and held them as hostages. The Komala had arrested some of the Islamic Republic forces and they wanted to exchange my aunts for the release of those forces.

8. At that time, my parents were in hiding in the mountains. When the Peshmerga forces went to Iraqi Kurdistan, my mother and my little sister, who was two years old at the time, went along with them. I stayed with my grandparents until my parents were able to find a suitable permanent place. After we returned from Yazd, when my parents became a bit more stable, they sent for me but my grandfather did not send me because he believed that their situation was still very uncertain. When my sister turned 5 years old, my parents sent her to be with my grandparents as well. We stayed in Sanandaj until I was 14 years old when I left Iran.