



**Witness Statement of Ronak Hisami**

**Name:** Ronak Hisami (Pseudonym)  
**Place of Birth:** Kurdistan, Iran  
**Date of Birth:** April 12, 1962  
**Occupation:** Freelance

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**Interviewing Organization:** Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC)

**Date of Interview:** April 16, 2010

**Interviewer:** IHRDC Staff

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This statement was prepared pursuant to an interview with Ronak Hisami. It was approved by Ronak Hisami on November 15, 2010.

## Statement

### MY LIFE IN IRAN

1. My name is Ronak Hisami. I am a 47 year old refugee from Iran, currently residing in Turkey with my two sons. My sons and I converted to Christianity in 2006 and our baptism ceremony was recorded on videotape.
2. Before leaving Iran in 2008, I wrote several articles on the state of political prisoners in Iran for foreign media based in Iraq. I wrote under a pen name in Kurdish and Persian languages. Besides my civil activities, I translated a few Kurdish books into Persian. The books I translated were about the history of Islam, based on *Tarikh-e Tabari* and other sources, which contradicts the version generally presented in history books.
3. Though I never engaged in political activism myself, I grew up in a family of political activists and married a political activist. Unfortunately, the political activities of those close to me produced a myriad of issues for my family.
4. A sibling of mine is a leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran. After illegally crossing the Iran-Iraq border to visit her, my eldest son and I were arrested and interrogated by Iranian authorities. Our interrogators asked us questions like, "Why did you illegally cross the border into Iraq," and "Why did you try to contact your sibling?" Worse still, they beat my son in front of me and beat me in front of him in order to compel us to speak. By the end of the beating, my face was heavily bruised and my son's nose was broken. Before releasing us, our interrogators warned us never to speak to anyone of our ordeal. We concealed our injuries by telling friends and family that we were involved in a car accident.
5. Like my sibling, my husband was also a member of the Secret Organization of the KDPI. His activities led to problems for himself as well as our family, and he was forced to flee Iran ten years ago.
6. My family suffered the consequences of my political activities. After his departure, I effectively became a widow while my sons grew up without a father. My younger son who was only 13 when his father left often tells me that he doesn't know the meaning of having a father. Furthermore, as a result of their father's political activities, neither of my sons was permitted to pursue their education in Iran. My older son was expelled from university and my younger son was expelled from high school. For my younger son, the fact that he never graduated high school is an endless source of shame and embarrassment. When my husband left, my older son was nineteen; he is now 29 years old. Finally, due to my husband's political activities my entire family was consistently subject to harassment by agents of the Islamic Republic. The harassment continued even after his departure.
7. My own political troubles stemmed from translating a set of books about the history of Islam that contradicted a number of ideas often propagated by the Islamic Republic. Due to the frequent searches of my home, I could not keep my work safe at my house. Consequently, I got into the habit of giving my finished translations to my son who, in turn, typed them into a computer at a friend's home. After transcribing the work, my son would save it onto the computer and so that I could send it to my contacts outside of the country. Ultimately, one of the books I translated was published while the other one was posted onto a blog. Out of fear of the political repercussions of translating a book that contradicted the Islamic Republic's dogma, I never told anyone outside my family about my work on this project. In fact, I once received the published book as a present

from a close friend who had no idea that I, in fact, was the person who translated the book into Persian.

8. One night the mother of my son's friend (whose computer was used by my son to type up my work) called to inform me that her son had been arrested and to warn me that his captors had taken everything in his room, including his computer—which contained all of my work. I do not know why or how he was exposed but he is still in prison.
9. As soon as I heard the news, I knew our situation was dire. The seized computer not only had the files from my translation work but also video files of my family's christening.
10. After seeing how brutally the Islamic Republic treated bloggers who wrote a critical sentence or two about Khamanei, I could only imagine what they would do to me. Frantically, I grabbed what I could from our drawers (including our passports and birth certificates) and left the house with my children. We went to a safer location to see what transpires.
11. Exactly three days after our departure, agents of the Islamic Republic raided our home and confiscated our property. To this day I'm still not sure what the agents took because I was too frightened to return to my home and check. After learning of the raid, we immediately made plans to leave the country and came to Turkey.

#### **GOVERNMENT ACTIONS POST DEPARTURE**

12. Following our departure, agents of the Islamic Republic interrogated all the members of my family to collect information about our whereabouts. Islamic Republic agents told my family that me and my two children are "anti-revolutionaries" and "heretics" and that we were guilty of the crime of *muharibih* [being at war with God], and asked them to reveal our hiding place.
13. The interrogators threatened my family by telling them that if they were uncooperative, they would be treated like anti-revolutionaries and punished accordingly. It got to a point that my brother emailed me and instructed me to leave the country because he didn't know how much longer he and the rest of my family could hold off on telling the interrogators my location.
14. The interrogators especially harassed my 70-year-old mother heavily to the point that during the interrogation, she had a seizure and suffered a heart attack and was transported to the hospital for treatment.
15. Also, the Islamic Republic also harassed my niece a lot. She sometimes contacted me to ask me questions that were all within the realm of what a young girl normally wonders about.
16. The interrogators asked my niece about why she had relations with me and my sibling in Iraq. My niece answered by saying that her mother died a long time ago and she has no one else to speak with about her issues and had only spoken to my sibling in Iraq once, having said nothing about the Party. In response, the interrogators told my niece that all of her words were secret codes that had been exchanged between her and my sibling! They had then asked her why she was in contact with her aunt in Turkey (meaning me) at all?! They told her that she did not have permission to speak with me and that if she did, she will be arrested for the crime of espionage.
17. Interestingly, the Islamic Republic treated my paternal family, who are religious, very differently than my maternal family, who are politically active. Instead of interrogating my paternal family, the Islamic Republic merely informed them that they had seen evidence of my conversion to

Christianity on a computer that was confiscated in an arrest. Once my paternal family knew we had converted, they put enormous pressure on my maternal family to cooperate with the investigation and help the Islamic Republic's efforts find us.

#### **LEAVING IRAN**

18. We exited Iran on September 12, 2008 by illegally crossing the border, intending to go to Europe via Turkey. Unfortunately, after crossing, the smuggler who transported us stole our money in Istanbul. We were left in a foreign country, without money, friends or plans.
19. Finally and through my sibling, I was placed in contact with an Iraqi Kurd who had a publishing house in Istanbul. He introduced me to a Turkish attorney who told me that my only hope was to seek help from the United Nations.