

Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Anfal:

The Mountain Valleys of Shaqlawa and Rawanduz, May 15-August 26, 1988

The forces of the "agent of Iran" Jalal Talabani had now been driven from their principal headquarters in the Jafati Valley, from their mountain strongholds in Qara Dag, from the broad plains of Germian and the valleys and flatlands that stretch west to Erbil. Here and there, in caves and isolated outposts, pockets of resistance lingered. Several dozen *peshmerga* even remained behind in the desolation of Germian throughout Anfal and beyond. But most of the remnants of the PUK were now making their way to the remote fastnesses to the north of Dukan Lake for their final stand, to the steep mountains and narrow valleys that lie south of the town of Rawanduz and west of the Iranian border.

To the west of the lake, battered units of *peshmerga* had learned of--and in some cases witnessed--the rout of the villages around Goktapa in the first week of May. Along the lakeshore, in the final engagements of the Fourth Anfal, the survivors of the battles at Takaltu Mountain and the Chemi Rezan Valley tried vainly to resist the army's onslaught. They hid out as best they could for three or four days, some of them hunkered down in the grasslands by the water's edge, and resisted until their ammunition ran out. At night, according to one *peshmerga*, when the government helicopters could no longer spot them, they pulled back, leaving the last civilians behind. At last, by the second week of May, they had reached Korak mountain and their familiar sanctuaries in the Balisan Valley.

It was to Balisan and the neighboring thinly populated valleys that Anfal came in the middle of May 1988. This was the climax of the regime's drive to destroy the PUK once and for all as a fighting force, to punish those civilians who continued to sustain it and to expel the last Iranian troops from the northern front of the Iran-Iraq War.¹ The mass relocation--and mass killing--of civilians would not be a pressing issue for the army in this phase of Anfal. The borderlands of Erbil governorate were now empty, their Kurdish population having been removed in two great sweeps, the first in 1977-1978 and the second in 1983-1984. And the valleys to the south and southeast of Rawanduz had been largely evacuated by civilians after the chemical attacks of April 1987.

From a strictly military point of view, the Anfal campaign continued to follow the logic of the great sweep that had begun three months earlier with the siege of Sergalou-Bergalou. The movement of the troops somewhat resembled the motion of a car's windshield wiper, first clockwise and then counter-clockwise, driving the diminishing forces of the *peshmerga* before it at every stage and "purifying" the countryside of the last of the Kurdish villages to remain intact under PUK control. Yet the Fifth Anfal, unlike the earlier stages of the operation, gave the Iraqi Army a great deal of trouble. A second and a third assault on these recalcitrant valleys would be required, and the Iraqi Army would designate these new campaigns Anfal VI and Anfal VII.

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The Balisan Valley was the headquarters of the PUK's third *malband*, controlling operations in Erbil governorate from the villages of Beiro and Tutma. Other parties were also present in this rugged and beautiful area, where bears and other wild animals still roamed the steep mountainsides. The Socialist Party of Kurdistan had been present here since its foundation in 1979, and there were also armed units from the Iraqi Communist Party and from Mas'oud Barzani's KDP, whose main strongholds lay further to the northwest, near the Iraqi-Turkish border. The leadership of the third *malband* knew full well that Anfal was on its way north. As the Fourth Anfal ended, the *peshmerga* began to gather food and ammunition, carrying supplies through the high mountain passes on muleback to hide them away in inaccessible caves, stockpiling enough to withstand a prolonged siege.² Hundreds of fighters congregated around the twin villages of Upper and Lower Garawan, seven or eight miles to the southeast of Rawanduz, while others took up positions in nearby Malakan, Akoyan and Warta.³

At least this time the *peshmerga* did not have to worry about how to protect the civilian population. Almost all the residents of these valleys had fled from their homes after the murderous poison gas attacks of the previous spring. There were only a few exceptions, such as Lower Bileh and Wara, where for very different reasons the villagers felt secure. Lower Bileh, tucked into folds of the mountains far from the road, had been a *peshmerga* base since even before the start of the Iran-Iraq War. Despite the chemical attack on the upper village on May 27, 1987,⁴ the people of Lower Bileh felt that they were protected by the remoteness of the place, and had chosen to stay where they were. But now, Bileh was newly vulnerable, since it was a transit point for *peshmerga* defending the frontline on nearby Chilchil and Jajouk mountains.

Wara was a different matter. There were no *peshmerga* in the vicinity, and the village was planted squarely on the paved road from Khalifan to the rundown town of Ranya, close to Dukan Lake. Its location made it useless as a base for the *peshmerga*, and past experience had taught the residents of Wara that their closeness to the government lines conferred a measure of safety. Although some had moved a few miles to Hartal, higher on the mountainside, most stayed put.

At dusk on May 15, the people of Wara were preparing for the 'Id al-Fitr, the festival which breaks the fast of Ramadan. Some of the former residents of the village, now living in Hartal, saw two airplanes fly low overhead, but they paid little attention to them, never thinking that Wara might be their objective. The nearest *peshmerga* units immediately realized what was happening, however, when they saw the *jahsh* lighting fires on the darkening mountain peaks--a sure sign that chemicals were being used. The people in Hartal were stunned when the first survivors came running to them, two hours later, to report that Wara had been hit with gas. "As soon as we arrived," said one man from Hartal, "we saw four or five people in the orchard on the hillside. They were obviously dying. Then we walked on a little further and found three people dead in the graveyard. When we reached the center of the village, we saw that the place was a mess. Food was still on the stoves. There were animals lying all around, dead or dying, and we could hear their screams."

A young woman named Amina was outside her house when the aircraft made their bombing run over Wara. "The sound I heard was like when a car races at very high speed and then you step on the brake. Then there were four explosions, and smoke covered the village." Amina's two-year old daughter, Najiba, was one of thirty-seven villagers who lost their lives that night.⁵ The survivors buried thirty-three bodies in a mass grave outside the village. Three were interred in the nearby village of Khateh, where they had been taken by tractor cart to the PUK field hospital, and one in the complex of Seruchawa, which already held the graves of fifty of the victims of the previous year's gassing of Sheikh Wasan.

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Morning brought an unnatural calm, which lasted for more than a week. Then, in the early afternoon of May 23, waves of aircraft dropped chemicals in Balisan, Hiran and other neighboring valleys. The attacks became so frequent at this point that the *peshmerga* lost count of them. An old woman from Upper Garawan, hiding in a cave, saw two warplanes swoop down over nearby Malakan and release bombs that produced a blue smoke which "covered the place and made everything dark." The gas, which smelled pleasant at first, quickly made the cave's occupants dizzy. Several of them fell to the ground, vomiting and teary-eyed, their skin turning black. A mother and her son in the cave died.⁶

While the entire valley suffered the effects of gas attacks against the *peshmerga* on Chilchil mountain, witnesses said that the largely abandoned villages of Sheikh Wasan and Balisan were hit directly for the second time. Soviet-built Sukhoi fighter-bomber aircraft carried out a 20-minute raid on Sheikh Wasan with both cluster bombs and chemical weapons. Although some of the *peshmerga* had German-made gas masks, there were not enough for their families, and everyone fled, combatants and non-combatants alike. In Bileh, the chemicals killed at least three children, including two siblings, Suran and Haydar Saleh Majid, aged two and three.⁷ Two people also reportedly died in the village of Nazanin; gas and cluster bombs fell over Seran village; chemical shells from a *rajima* rained on the mountain of Rashki Baneshan, and the heavy vapor drifted down into Akoyan village. Late in the night of May 23, or early the next morning, the ground troops made their simultaneous advance from three directions.

Most of the remaining civilians had fled to the hills as soon as this latest round of attacks began. "There was

a nasty smell in the places that had been bombed," recalled one woman who fled, and the corpses of horses and sheep overcome by gas still littered the fields. Like many others, the people of the village of Akoyan scattered in three directions. Some set out on foot or on horseback for the Iranian frontier, thirty-five miles away. Others sought sanctuary in the complex of Hajiawa, which had been built in 1987 at the northern edge of Dukan Lake, a three- or four-day walk distant. Others tried to hide out in the mountains.

After an arduous journey across rough, steep terrain, hundreds of refugees, including many of those from Akoyan and Garawan, converged on the uninhabited village of Gulan, almost half way to Ranya. They spent up to a month there, sleeping in the open air and surviving on the charity of the local people. They found themselves in the fiefdom of a powerful local leader called Swara Agha, of the Ako tribe. "He was the government in Gulan," said one fleeing villager who arrived there. "He had his own soldiers and *jahsh*; he owned everything except Saddam's airplanes."[8](#)

But tribal loyalties are relatively loose in this part of Iraqi Kurdistan, and even though they were not his people, Swara Agha made a deal with the newcomers that seems to have been unique in the story of Anfal. Those who wished could stay in his village, he told them; he would not let the military touch them. "He told the government we were all *jahsh*," according to a man from Garawan. And indeed those who made it as far as Gulan seem to have been spared. Some chose to remain there, while others--especially those who had family members in the *peshmerga* and were not in the mood to take any chances--opted for the sanctuary of Iranian refugee camps. The chieftain, Swara Agha, guaranteed them safe passage as far as the border--a trek that took all day and all night, with frequent detours to avoid Iraqi troop patrols.

Others who reached Gulan decided to surrender to the army and be relocated to the Hajiawa complex, outside the town of Ranya. It appears that they were allowed to do so freely, although conditions in the *mujamma'a* were abysmal. For the remainder of the summer it was hot and insanitary and there was no regular water supply; the camp was monitored by a police post, and its agents warned the inmates not to go too far: only to shop in Ranya or the larger complex of Seruchawa. After September, the searing heat gave way to bitter cold, and Zara, a woman from Garawan, lost two of her seven children that winter--Shilan, aged three, and Isma'il, aged two.[9](#)

The experience of the third group of fugitives from Akoyan, those who tried to survive in the mountains, is summed up in the experience of Amina, a woman in her early thirties. Amina had left home one day at 7:00 a.m., before the soldiers could reach her village. By noon she had found a hiding place, where she met up with other refugees from Bileh and Garawan. They were some fifty households in all in the group, and they hid out for several days until word came that the troops were closing in on them. After wandering around in the mountains for hours, they reached another hiding place overlooking the village of Faqian. Here, too, they remained for four days, until the artillery fire came too close for comfort. They walked on again, losing all track of time, heading northwest over the high peaks, venturing out only after nightfall, until they reached the government-controlled village of Julamerg, exhausted and out of food.[10](#)

These were the unlucky ones, even though the first signs were encouraging; *jahsh* manning the checkpoints at Julamerg declined to arrest them, telling them that "this is not the appropriate time to come to the butcher's hand."[11](#) Despite this, they were quickly rounded up by army troops. Their names were recorded, their photographs taken, and they were taken to the nearby military post at Spielk, outside the town of Khalifan, where they were housed for several days under canvas, eight or nine families to each tent, in an area enclosed by barbed wire. The women and children who had surrendered after the attack on Lower Bileh were also here; their menfolk, who fled to the mountains briefly before turning themselves in, were brought to Spielk later.

According to survivors, Lower Bileh was the only village in the area to suffer large-scale civilian disappearances during Anfal. The events in Lower Bileh are also referred to in official Iraqi documents. One handwritten *Amn* field report notes that "on the night of June 2-3, thirty families from the village of Lower Bileh were received by the military command of FQ 45. They were counted and surveyed by us. We will presently send you lists of their names, addresses and birthdates."[12](#) Here is further official confirmation of what survivors reported with numbing frequency--that a specific civilian group was in government custody at the moment it vanished. The *Amn* note indicates again that there was nothing indiscriminate about these disappearances; no one was to be "Anfalized" until his or her personal data had been recorded and analysed on a case-by-case basis.

Some of those affected by the Fifth Anfal disappeared from Spielk. Others were glimpsed through a window in a prison in Rawanduz. Others still vanished into the custody of *Amn* in Erbil. But as in the previous four phases of Anfal, the same detail recurs in one account after another: from these interim places of detention, the prisoners were bundled into army IFA trucks, which always departed south in the direction of Kirkuk.

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The PUK's Last Stand

The battles raged on and off for more than three months. During the periods of fighting, says a *peshmerga* who saw action in the Balisan region, "the heaven was never empty" of government aircraft.¹³ Although government forces quickly occupied some twenty villages in these valleys, the *peshmerga* felt that the difficult landscape had frustrated the regime's goal of cutting off their main escape routes to Iran. The villagers who remained in the mountains also saw that their homes were being left intact for the time being. With the terrain limiting themovement of ground forces, the campaign of village demolition would wait until special helicopter-borne engineering units were flown in towards the end of the year.

Upper and Lower Garawan seem to have been a particularly tough nut for the army to crack. The twin villages are the subject of a number of contradictory field reports exchanged by local and regional branches of *Amn* during June 1988. Telegram no. 1132 from *Amn* Sadiq to *Amn* Shaqlawa, dated June 3, refers to the "purification and burning of Lower Garawan." However, telegram no. 1136 from Sadiq to Erbil, dated June 6, refers to a continuing "siege of Upper and Lower Garawan," indicating that *peshmerga* forces there were still putting up resistance; telegram no. 1137, dated the next day, announces the "fall of Upper and Lower Garawan." A further telegram, no. 1179, dated June 14 and again from *Amn* Sadiq, informs regional headquarters in Erbil that a number of villages have now been burned, including Garawan.¹⁴

After hiding out in the mountains for weeks, several people from Garawan crept back into their village in search of food. Some homes had been destroyed by shelling, but most were still standing at this point and official records suggest that the destruction was carried out sporadically over the next several months.¹⁵ But leveled they were: When inhabitants were at last able to return to Garawan in 1991, after the post-war uprising, they found that "everything had been destroyed, exploded by dynamite; even the pipes were taken that brought the water from the spring." All signs of life had vanished, even the beehives. The poplar trees used for roofing material had been cut down. Even this was not enough, it seems. "They also destroyed a martyrs' cemetery [for *peshmerga* who had fallen] that had been built in the area of Zenia," said a fighter from Garawan, who was hiding nearby and had relatives interred there. The man watched from the mountainside through binoculars as a group of *jahsh* and soldiers dynamited and desecrated the graves.¹⁶

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From the regime's point of view, the Fifth Anfal had been a messy and inconclusive operation--the only phase of the operation so far that had lacked a clear beginning and end. The government's intention had been to wipe out the PUK and then move on to the Badinan area, running up to the Turkish border, which was controlled by the KDP. But this goal had to be postponed for several months, because the resistance of the third *malband*'s forces was more tenacious than the Iraqi Army had anticipated.

The atmosphere of frustration and repeated delays can be gleaned from the telegrams that flew back and forth between local *Amn* offices. June 4: "Met strong resistance while advancing on Korak mountain"; June 8: "Special Anfal Operations: Attack by Saboteurs"; June 27, and again July 8: "Purification of Gelli Resh, Badawara, Gilga"; August 15: "Request complete picture of purification of the region within 24 hours."¹⁷

The sense that the Fifth Anfal was not a great success also emerges clearly from an unusually detailed military document entitled "Analysis: Final Anfal Operation," (*Khatimat al-Anfal*). This is a report to the

Army General Command from Brigadier General Yunis Muhammad al-Zareb, Commander of the Fifth Army Corps. It is classified "Strictly confidential and personal." In essence, the report is a glowing review of the brief, triumphant campaign against the KDP-held areas of the north, between August 28 and September 3, 1988. But in reviewing the background to the Final Anfal, it speaks of innumerable delays in "purifying" the Rawanduz-Shaqlawa sector. It also provides a revealing picture of the chain of command that ordered the successive stages of the Anfal operation.

"After the completion of Operation Anfal V on June 7, 1988, preparations and plans were embarked upon for Operation Anfal VI," Gen. Zareb writes. "A cleansing operation was planned to crush the saboteurs in the Alana and Balisan valleys (Anfal VI). This plan was sent to the Army Chief of Staff on May 30, 1988 in my strictly confidential and personal communication no. 1049." But this first plan did not materialize, for, "The Army Chief of Staff, in his confidential and urgent communication no. 1475 of June 7, 1988, ordered the postponement of the operation until a more suitable time. The Chief of Staff, in his strictly confidential and personal communication no. 519 of June 7, 1988, ordered a plan to be devised to crush the saboteurs in the Balisan and Smaqli regions."

The main reason for the decision to suspend the campaign temporarily seems to have been the obstinate resistance of the PUK around Korak mountain, a 7,000-foot peak at the head of the Alana Valley. But the temporary ceasefire, which held until well into July, may also have been connected to the June visit to Washington, D.C. by PUK leader Jalal Talabani. Although the *peshmerga* were excited by this trip, which was seen as a diplomatic breakthrough, it can scarcely be considered a success. Senior U.S. officials declined to meet with Talabani, and the mid-level State Department personnel who did see him commented only that, "Because of his Iranian alliance, his group has enjoyed a certain degree of military success at the expense of the Kurdish population as a whole."¹⁸ This remark essentially reflected the line of the Iraqi government toward the PUK. Since Talabani is known to have informed U.S. officials about the Anfal operation and the recent chemical attacks against the Kurds, his visit also raises the question of how much Washington may have known about the Kurdish genocide as it was happening.¹⁹

"The plan for the destruction of the saboteurs' headquarters in the Smaqli area," General Zareb continues, "was provided in our communication no, 1572, dated August 15, 1988 [sic]."²⁰

"In a confidential and personal communication no. 2544/K of June 23, 1988, sent to us by the Army Chief of Staff in communication no. 641 of June 24, the Presidency of the Republic (Secretary) gave its agreement to launch the operation and destroy the headquarters of the saboteurs in the Balisan basin and the Smaqli region."

President Saddam Hussein himself, then, evidently saw fit to involve himself in operational decisions about Anfal, at least when the campaign was running into difficulties. Gen. Zareb went on:

"In a confidential and personal communication no. 14671 of July 16, 1988 from the office of the Presidency of the Republic, relayed to us by the Army Chief of Staff in confidential and personal communication no. 861 of July 20, we were informed that the Anfal operations should be completed with a high momentum after the religious feast [of the 'Id al-Adha], if God so desires."²¹

But God did not appear to be smiling on the enterprise, and several days after the 'Id al-Adha the offensive remained stalled. "In a meeting held at the headquarters of the First Army Corps in Kirkuk on the morning of July 29, 1988, attended by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and the Director of Military Movements, and pursuant to confidential communication no. 943 of July 29, Anfal operations VI and VII were postponed until operational requirements were completed."

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While the Iraqi regime grappled with the delays to the Sixth and Seventh Anfals, events elsewhere were giving the *peshmerga* fresh cause for alarm. On July 17, then Iranian President Ali Khamenei notified UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar that his country was willing to accept UN Security Council Resolution 598.²² As far as the PUK was concerned, Iran's decision to end the fighting was a breach of the

terms of their October 1986 Teheran agreement, which had stipulated that neither party would make a unilateral deal with Baghdad. But they were powerless to do anything about it--as powerless as Mullah Mustafa Barzani had been when the Shah cut off his supply lines to the KDP in 1975.

On July 26, the day after the 'Id al-Adha, the commanders of the third *malband* held an emergency meeting and decided that a partial withdrawal was its only option. Anyone who was unable to fight should now take their families to safety in Iran; the able-bodied *peshmerga* would stay behind to harass the troops and protect the retreat. Even as the evacuation began, the Iraqi Air Force launched another fierce chemical attack. Again, it struck all the main valleys: Balisan, Malakan, Warta, Hiran, Smaquli. Thirteen people died in a number of different locations, said one *peshmerga* who fought in this theater; fifteen, according to another account. The clouds of gas drove the *peshmerga* to seek safety on the upper mountain slopes; but early the next morning a second attack with cluster bombs drove them down again. Many of those who remained now scattered in confusion, and the last of the civilians were mopped up quickly.

A contingent of *jahsh* arrived in the Smaquli valley one August morning to find the population fleeing from artillery fire. Via loudspeaker, the *mustashar* urged them to surrender, and after five days a considerable number of people had turned themselves in. They were divided into three groups by age and sex and their names were registered. The men were told that they would be pardoned, but only if they surrendered with their weapons. Since many of them were unarmed civilians, this was difficult, and they were reduced to digging up caches of *peshmerga* arms in order to hand over whatever guns they could lay their hands on. Some were even allowed to buy guns from the *jahsh* in order that they might qualify for a pardon. The men were then ordered to sign a confession that they were indeed *peshmerga*. Once this grim charade was over, the *mustashar* recalled, "all these people disappeared via Topzawa"--the Popular Army camp outside Kirkuk that served as the main processing center for the victims of Anfal.[23](#)

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During the weeks that followed, hardly a day went past without further chemical attacks, even after the Iranians had accepted Saddam Hussein's terms for the ceasefire on August 8. Although the *peshmerga* were now in full flight, the Iraqi Army never did manage to cut off the two main avenues of escape to Iran. Sympathetic *jahsh* commanders like Swar Agha helped the last families to reach the border, and on August 26 or 27 the remaining *peshmerga* contingents in the Balisan Valley dynamited their headquarters and fled. By the 28th, ground and airborne forces had occupied the entire area. The PUK was finished as a fighting force, and the whole territory where it had once held sway was under the control of the Iraqi government.

With this, the regime turned its attention further north, to the region of Badinan, the principal stronghold of the KDP. This time, the campaign would not be given a number; it would simply be designated the Final Anfal. As Brig. Gen. Zareb's report indicates, the plans had been in the works for several weeks, concurrently with preparations for the Seventh Anfal. Zareb writes: "In a highly confidential and personal communication no. 941 of July 28, 1988, sent to us by the General Commander of the Armed Forces, instructions were given to deal the saboteurs a crushing blow in the Badinan sector."

"A meeting was held on August 7 at the headquarters of the First Army Corps in Kirkuk," the general continues, "chaired by Comrade Ali Hassan al-Majid, member of the Regional Command and Secretary General of the Northern Bureau. This meeting was also attended by the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Directors of Military Movements and the Air Force." There is a laconic hint of what must have been al-Majid's fierce mood: "Instructions were given to put an end to all acts of saboteurs in the northern region."

After some additional meetings to fine-tune the details, the army's responsibilities were assigned. "It was decided that the First Army Corps should operate in the Balisan-Smaquli sector, and that the Fifth Corps should operate in the two areas of Sheikhan and Zakho in the Badinan strip. This was in accordance with a highly confidential and personal communication no. 1076 of August 16, 1988 from the Army Chief of Staff."

It remained only to fix dates. There were two. The preparatory, or softening-up, stage of the final Anfal would commence on August 25, and as in almost every preceding phase of Anfal, this meant attacks from

the air with chemical weapons. On August 28, the ground troops would go in, "with the first rays of the dawn."²⁴

1 Losing ground rapidly after the loss of Fao, Iran attempted one final offensive in the south on June 13, 1988, but it was contained by Iraqi forces. Simultaneously, the Iraqi Army's First Corps--which handled the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Anfal operations in the area south of Rawanduz--recaptured a number of strategic mountain peaks that the Iranians had been holding in the north. See Jupa and Dingeman, *op. cit.*, p.8; on the overall military situation in June 1988, see also Cordesman and Wagner, *op. cit.*, pp.384-390.

2 Middle East Watch interview with a PUK *peshmerga*, Galala complex, March 23, 1993.

3 The two Garawans, like much of this area, had been a thorn in the regime's side for a long time. One *Amn* report, dated April 22, 1987 (less than a week, that is, after the chemical attacks on Sheikh Wasan and Balisan a few miles away) speaks of an attempt--presumably unsuccessful--by a joint force of army, police, *Amn* and Ba'ath Party Special Forces to raze the villages of Upper and Lower Garawan. *Amn* Shaqlawa to *Amn* Erbil, letter no. 5614, classified "secret and confidential" and dated April 22, 1987.

4 See page 51.

5 Middle East Watch interview, Wara, March 24, 1993.

6 Middle East Watch interview, Garawan, April 29, 1992.

7 Middle East Watch interview, Ramhaweij village, July 18, 1992.

8 Swara Agha was reportedly a former PUK member who had surrendered and made his own separate peace with Baghdad, promising that areas under his control would stay neutral. Middle East Watch interviews with villagers from Akoyan and Garawan, April 28 and 29, 1992.

9 Middle East Watch interview, Garawan, April 29, 1992. It remains a mystery why those who surrendered in Gulan were spared, while people from the same villages who surrendered to the army at Julamerg were sent to the Anfal camps. The difference may be explained by the clemency of a local army commander.

10 Julamerg lies a little to the south of the town of Khalifan, at the head of the Alana Valley. It was near here, on the banks of the Alana river, that the survivors of the April 1987 Sheikh Wasan and Balisan chemical bombing had been dumped by *Amn*.

11 Julamerg itself survived intact until September 3, when it was destroyed, according to a September 3, 1988 telegram from *Amn* Shaqlawa to *Amn* Erbil, no. 4799, alluding to the "purification" of the Alana Valley by the army's 37th Division.

12 According to survivors, this list ran to 267 villagers from Bileh. "Secret and confidential" telegram no. 1130 of June 3, 1988, from *Amn* Sadiq to *Amn* Erbil. "FQ 45" appears to refer to the Army's 45th Division (*firqa*), based in Khalifan. This report is one of a sequence of forty-two *Amn* telegrams giving daily field updates on the period from June 3 to September 18, 1988. These papers make it possible to reconstruct in some detail the course of the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Anfals--as well as providing a glimpse of the evident frustration of the First Army Corps as it attempted to "purify" these recalcitrant areas of "saboteurs."

13 Middle East Watch interview, Ramhaweij village, July 18, 1992.

14 Burning may not be the same thing as demolition. It is worth noting that Resool lists the date of destruction of the two Garawans, as well as the neighboring villages of Akoyan and Faqian, as August 28, 1988. He also lists many villages in these sectors as not being destroyed until December 1988. This is the case, for example, with eleven villages in the *nahya* of Salah al Din and eight in the *nahya* of Harir (both *qadha* of Shaqlawa). See also below, p.325.

15 This appears to have been a frequent practice. For example, an extensive file of *Amn* and army documents dated August 18-22, 1988 indicates that many of the villages that had been occupied during the Third and Fourth Anfal--including the sites of important clashes such as Sheikh Tawil and the Chemi Rezan Valley--were not destroyed until several months later. This campaign also destroyed any crops, vehicles and stores that remained, with the goal, as one document put it, of "removing any signs of life" in the Anfal areas. *Amn* Kalar, "secret and urgent" cable no. 19442 of August 20, 1988.

Similarly, even while the Fourth and Fifth Anfals were underway, other military units were burning scores of villages in the Qala Dizeh area, to the east of Dukan Lake, where there were no hostilities at this time. This parallel campaign of village destruction was described to Middle East Watch in an interview with a survivor from the village of Binowshan, May 23, 1992. These villages, however, were not considered to be part of the Anfal operation.

16 Middle East Watch interview, Garawan, April 29, 1992.

17 From, respectively, "secret and urgent" *Amn* telegrams nos. 1333 (Sadiq to Erbil); 3215 (Shaqlawaw to Erbil); 1293 (Sadiq to Shaqlawa) and 3550 (Shaqlawaw to Erbil); and 12233 (Erbil to Shaqlawa).

18 *The New York Times*, June 22, 1988.

19 Middle East Watch conversation with PUK officials, Washington, D.C., May 2, 1993. Documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by Middle East Watch and the National Security Archive throw scanty light on this contentious issue.

One Defense Department cable, dated April 19, 1988, notes that "an estimated 1.5 million Kurdish nationals have been resettled in camps"; that "approximately 700-1000 villages and small residential areas were targeted for resettlement"; that "an unknown but reportedly large number of Kurds have been placed in 'cowcentration' (sic) camps located near the Jordanian and Saudi Arabian borders"; and that "movement by the local population throughout the north has been severely restricted." The long section that follows is heavily deleted.

A second Defense Department cable, dated June 15, 1988, makes reference to Talabani's visit to the United States and reports on a new Iraqi offensive against Iranian forces in Kurdistan. It also makes a clear allusion to the Fifth Anfal: "The offensive, if confirmed, follows sweeps against Kurdish and Iranian positions in both V and I Corps that have continued for about two weeks. Iran and the Kurds have accused Iraq of using chemical weapons in the operations."

20 In view of the chronology laid out below, this date is evidently incorrect.

21 The 'Id al-Adha, in the Muslim calendar, occurs 50 days following the eighth day of Ramadan. In 1988, when Ramadan began on April 17, this would have fallen on July 25.

22 Security Council Resolution 598, adopted on July 20, 1987, called for an immediate ceasefire to be monitored by UN observers. The full text is contained in Hiro, *The Longest War*, pp.309-310.

23 Middle East Watch interview with former *mustashar*, Suleimaniyeh, June 30, 1992.

24 All these extracts are taken from the 60-page report from the Fifth Army Corps Commander to the Command of the Staff of the Army, "Analysis: Final Anfal Operation, for the Period August 28 to September 3, 1988," dated December 25, 1988 and coded H2/2422.