



MOD-83-0000321-A

Name of witness: Ayad Salem Hanoon
Number of statement:
Date: 21/4/2016

Investigation in the death of Ahmad Jabbaar Kareem

Witness Statement

Ayad Salem Hanoon

I, Ayad Salem Hanoon, will state as follows:

- 1) I give this statement for the purposes of the investigation in the death of Ahmad Jabbaar Kareem at the hand of the British Forces in Basra, Iraq.
- 2) I am an Iraqi citizen born on [REDACTED] and I work as a blacksmith. My current address is [REDACTED] near [REDACTED] (which was my address at the time of the incident).
- 3) I asked for giving this statement in order to correct some mistakes or misunderstanding or translation of some facts which were mentioned in my previous statement regarding the incident that led to the death of Ahmad Jabbaar Kareem (witness statement dated 10/5/2003 and another dated 15/4/2006 and a third I had given to the police station of [REDACTED] in Basra, Iraq on 23/7/2003) which was read to me by [REDACTED] QC Law Office as I neither write nor read.
- 4) On 8/5/2003 which was a Thursday and at 08:00 am, I went to an area located behind the Baghdad Garage at Saad Square in Basra in order to take things that had been placed in open stores and left in that area which was situated behind the republican hospital (now known as Basra General Hospital). There were banks, institutions and companies with broken doors flung open due to the war in that period. As a consequence of the absence of security, the spread of poverty and works coming to a standstill, that situation was an indirect invitation for looting.
- 5) I entered a store in the aforesaid area (it was called *Jamloun* in colloquial Iraqi) and contained vehicles' spare parts. There I found the deceased and other individuals. We started opening things to take with us. I had met Ahmad in that same place two days before the incident.
- 6) I was present in one part of the store and in that part there had been a huge opening while Ahmad and others were present in the other side of the storage. As I was untying a few of the things that had been there, there came shouting from the individuals who were with me in the storage; "*The British are here.... The British are here.*" There and then I ran away from the aforesaid opening without taking anything with me. I ran until I reached a street called *Altananeer* which led to the street where Basra General Hospital is located. Thinking that the British should have left the area, I decide to go back home, but since the road to my house

passes the aforesaid store by, I was surprised to see British soldiers and Iraqi police on that way.

- 7) One of the British soldiers recognised me and shouted at me, "Ali Baba... Ali Baba" and I began to run escaping him but the soldier ran after me. I dashed into an abandoned plot of land with garbage in it. I lay in between the garbage piles in order to hide myself to no avail because the soldier spotted and hurried towards me and punched me right on my right eye and I fell on the ground and leaned on the wall. The soldier continued to hit me and he dragged me on the ground which led to my right hand being cut by a sharp metal piece that was in the garbage.
- 8) The soldier then handcuffed me with a piece of cloth that was on the ground and led me to a place opposite the aforesaid storage. (I would like to point out that the above mentioned storage was behind Basra General Hospital) where there were 3 British soldiers and between 4-6 Iraqi police men. They arrested Ahmad and two other persons wearing *dishdashas* and all of them were stood handcuffed with their faces to the wall. I was stood beside them likewise. At that time we were being beaten and the beating lasted for about five minutes.
- 9) The four British soldiers as well as the Iraqi policemen walked us for about ten minutes or less to a pool of stale water (drainage water) where the British soldiers tore up all our clothes except our underwear. I was without underwear when the British soldier tried to tear up my trousers so I implored to him through signalling not to and he left me with them on.
- 10) Then the soldiers indicated to us to get into the dirty pool where there were floating garbage as well as dogs. It was not deep. Knee-deep it was. We got into the pool and stones were thrown at us by the British soldiers as well as some children who happened to be in the area, as a way to force us to submerge our heads completely under the water, which we had to do in order to protect ourselves. This situation lasted about ten minutes.
- 11) After that, the soldiers indicated for us to get out and they tied my left hand to Ahmad's right hand and the other two individuals (I mean the ones wearing *dishdashas*) together, we then were led walking (without clothes other than the underwear for Ahmad the others and with trousers in my case) in the direction of Basra General Hospital at the main gate of which stood their armoured vehicle for protection purposes of the hospital. On our way to the hospital and as we reached as far as the back wall of the hospital, they ordered us to climb the wall and into the hospital. The front door was farther from where we were. Climbing the wall was hard for me with my hand being tied up to Ahmad's hand. However, we climbed the wall and the British soldiers and the Iraqi police followed us by climbing the wall.
- 12) When we entered the hospital we walked towards the armoured vehicle and we were placed on the floor and there were two soldiers in the vehicle, one being the driver and the second stationed behind an automatic gun at the top of the armoured vehicle. There was a container (cork) with water and pepsi for the use of the soldiers as well as the people walking in and out of the hospital.
- 13) It is worth mentioning that the Iraqi policemen did not attack us with beating and they did not tear up our clothes, however, they were saying to us some words to intimidate us like "*we will make you die... today we will take you to the director*".

14. We sat by the armoured vehicle 3-4 minutes, then we were put inside the armoured vehicle and two of the four soldiers sat alongside us, the other two stayed back in the hospital. So there were four soldiers in the armoured vehicle, the driver soldier and the gun soldier who had been there all the time, and the other two soldiers who were beating us and sat by us in the armoured vehicle.
- 15) The armoured vehicle set off and during the journey the two soldiers sitting opposite us continued to beat us and kick us with their shoes. The huge one of them took off his military hat (beret) which had a metal crown attached to it, folded it and then with the crown side against my forehead he went punching the hat with the intention of injuring my forehead.
- 16) After 15 minutes, I recall, the armoured vehicle stopped under Alzubair Bridge, at the side facing Basra when the two soldiers who were with us in the armoured vehicle stepped down and made us come down while beating us before they untied us and started to yell at us to get into the river. The two persons in *dishdashas* swam in the river immediately and since Ahmad did not know how to swim and I was not a good swimmer we begged the soldiers (by signs) so that we did not have to get into the river but they wouldn't listen and would push us into the water at gun point.
- 17) We got down to the river slowly and cautiously and then the soldiers started to throw stones at us in order to force us to go deeper into the water. In an attempt to save myself, I struggled kicking to lift myself up in the water. As for Ahmad, he was also trying to dive and get up. He did that about twice when one of the soldiers (I think it was the driver soldier or the other soldier who was at the top of the armoured vehicle, both got off the armoured vehicle also) felt the impending danger Ahmad was in and went taking his clothes off completely (except his underwear) in order to get into the water to save Ahmad, but one of the other soldiers prevented him at gunpoint from doing so. It seems that Ahmad had then gone under the water because I did not see him after that. In the meantime, the soldiers mounted the armoured vehicle and drove off.
- 18) Upon the soldiers leaving the place I got myself out of the river followed by the other two individuals (in *dishdashas*) who asked me about Ahmad. I told them he did not get out and that I thought he had drowned. They advised me not to inform Ahmad's family, in order to avoid problems. Then we went on the bridge and the two individuals took a taxi while I walked from the bridge to Alzubair checkpoint where I took a taxi from there to my house.
- 19) I was shattered when I got home. I informed my family of what had happened. My brother said to me that he was going to inform Ahmad's father the next day in the marketplace. Myself and my brother had known Ahmad and his father slightly and that they were selling spare parts in Basra market.
- 20) The next day (Friday) my brother ([REDACTED]) went to Basra market and asked Ahmad's father whether Ahmad returned home and he said no, and then my brother informed him of Ahmad's drowning in Alzubair River and he gave Ahmad's father our home address as we had not known each other's addresses before then.
- 21) On Saturday, Ahmad's father and brother and some of their relatives came to my house to ask me about what had happened. After the conversation and seeing my physical condition and the traces of bruises on my body, they were sure I had had nothing to do with Ahmad's death. Therefore they took me to the British headquarters which was housed in the Basra

Transport Department in the Menawi Basha area where a complaint about what happened was presented.

22) In 2006 I was accompanied to Basra Airport by the British Army in order to interrogate me where they showed me on the computer photographs of some British soldiers to see if I recognised the four soldiers who were not among those in the pictures. Then they brought the four soldiers in person for me to recognise them, but I answered saying they were not themselves the ones who were in the armoured vehicle in fear of problems. However, and after I had submitted my written witness statement, the interpreter (who was [REDACTED]) spoke to me. "Were those four soldiers the ones?" he said, "do not be afraid to say." Then I told him the truth. I said "yes, but I did not inform the officer of that when he showed me the soldiers and interrogated me."

- Because I do not read or write, this statement was read to me by the lawyer Khaled Salim Alkaabi from Al Qarnawi QC Law and I hereby confirm to the best of my knowledge and belief that this content is true. I sign thereupon.

Name of witness: Ayad Salem Hanoon

Signed

Dated: 21/4/2016