

# **Towards Systematic Steps for Exploring Genocide in Iraq**

## **Rebuilding The Defficalt heritage mommery of Iraq's Marshes**

**Professor Salah Al Jabery (Ph.D)**

**The Chairholder Of Unesco Chair For Genocide Prevention Studies In The Islamic World at University Of Baghada**

### **Introduction**

Our cultural project to face genocide aims to open field of genocide studies, and to complete the significant lack of this type of studies that Arab library suffers.

The focusing on genocide studies in Iraq and comparing its negative impacts on the society will help the Iraqi people to prevent violence and genocide and encourage the new younger generations for integration and enhance the peace and varied culture, in addition to deepen the culture of tolerance .

there are many sciences will be contribute in these studies, such as law, political science, history Archaeology, psychology, sociology and philosophy.

The phenomena of genocide (cultural and physical) had deep roots in human history, therefore we need to Archaeology of genocide for excavation of these roots and study its deferent Dimensions, To expose these inhuman practices and prevent their recurrence.

There are several factors that motivate some of the political systems and ethnic or sectarian groups to commit genocide against minorities and other ethnic and sectarian groups. Such as, cultural, political, national, racial, economical, religious, ..... factors and so on. What we interested in is a cultural factor. Therefore we need to new culture other than classical one to face thought and culture of terrorism.

However, most of the genocides in Iraq lack exploration, documentation and classification. Therefore, our task in this research is to explore the genocide and rebuild the memory of the difficult heritage of the marshes in particular, for the following reasons:

First: The marshes constitute an important world heritage registered with UNESCO

Second: Re-discovering the marshes in conditions of genocide, drying and forced displacement of their inhabitants

Third: Exposing the impact of the marshes on the environment and climate in Iraq and the world, as the campaigns to drain and destroy them carried out by Saddam's regime caused severe harm, not only to the Iraqis, but to the whole world.

Forth: The importance of the biological and environmental diversity of the marshes and the wealth they provide to their inhabitants.

## **The Historical Background**

The phenomena of conflict and genocide had deep roots in Iraq, therefore we need to investigate the Archaeology of genocide to excavate these roots and study its different Dimensions, so as to expose these inhuman practices and prevent their recurrence by Educate it to the new younger generation.

The Saddam Regime committed many genocides against Iraqi components Specially Shea and Kurdish, like displacement of thousands of Iraqi Shea families to Iran in 1978- 1981, and the confiscation of their property and assets, mass killings of young people, the elderly, women and children, and many of them were buried alive in mass graves through uprising in 1991. Attacking Kurdish cities with chemical weapons and killing tens of thousands of civilians. ethnic cleansing against Kurdish nationalism in the so-called "Anfal", an attack that led to the displacement of thousands of Kurdish families from their land and looting their property.

In August 2014 ISIS swept across the Sinjar and Nineveh plains and began targeted attacks against indigenous Yazidis, Christians (including ethnic Assyrians), Shia Turkmen, and other religious minorities. ISIS carried out its plan to eliminate the Yazidi people, killing the men and adolescent boys, and abducting thousands of women and children. Young boys were indoctrinated and forced to fight for ISIS, while women and girls as young as nine were enslaved and sold as chattel to ISIS militants. While in captivity they were subjected to beatings, forced labor, forced marriages, and sustained sexual violence under an organized system of sexual enslavement. The United Nations, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and other national and

### **The definitions**

We can say that dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussien and Terrorism like Al Qaeda and ISIS have committed two kinds of crimes against humanity in Iraq: physical genocide, and cultural genocide.

Physical genocide is distinct from other crimes against humanity in special intent to destroy, in whole or in part, national, ethnical, racial or religious group.<sup>i</sup>

The physical genocide, according to (Article II ) from UN convention, is:

“Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such<sup>ii</sup>:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The criterion that distinguishes genocide as a conceptual category is the intentional attempt to annihilate a social group that has been marked as different.

We can summarize the significant characteristics of genocide as such: “intend to or intention), “prevent the community from reproducing”, “killing groups not individual”, targeting racial, national, ethnic, religious groups”.<sup>iii</sup>

### **The cultural genocide**

according to Article III of UN convention: any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of national or racial origin or religious belief such as:

1. Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group;
2. destroying, or preventing the use of, libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural institutions and objects of the group.<sup>14</sup>

Another example was soon added:

3. subjecting members of a group to such conditions as would cause them to renounce their language, religion or culture.

### **The physical genocide in Iraq:**

There are many events of genocide happened in Iraq during modern history. Some of them of sectarian factor, other of national and racial factors.

### **Sectarian and religious genocide in Iraq:**

1. For the sectarian or religious factor, represented in Saudi Wahhabi tribal attack on Karbala in 1802 and Najaf in 1802 and 1806. They killed 8 thousands of civilians and destroyed the city included the shrine of Imam Husien and looted its precious valuables..
2. Punish Shiites who lived in the marshes and surrounding areas for a way of coercive and violent practices to force them to emigrate and to leave their land and property . these practices took different forms:

❖ The practice of sectarian cleansing against the Shiites by the displacement of thousands of Iraqi families to Iran in 1980- 1981, and the confiscation of their property and assets. The expulsion led to the death of hundreds of elderly and children on their way to Iran through the Badlands, and mined, some of whom were killed in indiscriminate shelling while their passage to the field of battle, others died by drowning, others died due to illness .

❖ Attack the marshes and surrounding areas permanently by aircrafts and artilleries.

❖ Arresting Men and women of those areas of the young and middle-aged and placed in prison without trial, and then killed them and buried them in mass graves discovered after the fall of the dictatorial regime.

❖ Preventing the delivery of food to areas of marshes and withhold the ration card for most of the population, and that leading to malnutrition and the spread of deadly diseases.

❖ diverting water of Euphrates river from the marshes, which led to the death of agricultural crops and then led to the desertification of agricultural land and receding water completely from the marshes, which led to the death of fish and animals such as buffalo, cows and birds that live in this natural environment, and this led to the destabilization of ecological balance in the Region.

3. The Mass graves which discovered in Iraq after the downing of dictatorial system are very irrefutable evidence of genocide committed by Saddam regime against She'a in Iraq.

### **National and racial genocide in Iraq:**

1. Attack Kurdish cities with chemical weapons and kill tens of thousands of civilians.

2. The practice of ethnic cleansing against Kurdish nationalism in so-called "Anfal", an attack that led to the expulsion of thousands of Kurdish families from their land and looting their property<sup>iv</sup>.

3. mass graves of Kurdish nation which discovered in several cities in south of Iraq, and that they contain dozens of civilian casualties.

### **The cultural genocide in Iraq:**

As physical genocide, Iraq has witnessed a number of events can be classified as cultural genocide, these events took also many forms:

1. Prevent any form of political parties and cultures that compete with the ruling party and the culture of the ruling authority. The political genocide has excluded from UN genocide convention, but there is some objection on justification of this exclusion, as considered by Beth van Schaak a blind spot in the convention<sup>v</sup>.

2. Prevent rituals and habits of other sects and creeds as inconsistent with the doctrine of the ruling power and the dominant culture.

3. The killing of Iraqis intellectuals or forcing them to emigrate from the homeland and prevent the intellectual and philosophical dialogue which Baghdad known with it throughout its long intellectual history, Which led to a weakening intellectual contribution of Baghdad in the Arab and World contemporary philosophical movements.

4. Prevention of national and ethnic minorities in Iraq from using their native languages, and the regime's attempt to dissolve their culture in the Arab national culture, which led to the weakening of their identity ,then loosing of sense of belonging to the homeland. This what has happened to Kurdish nation in Iraq.

5. Prevent the sale and purchase of the intellectual and cultural books that do not consist with the ruling ideology, and burning intellectual and religious books in universities and colleges libraries, also in the public libraries.

6. Subjecting the culture and art of various kinds to the trends of ruling regime and of its underdeveloped ideas which isolated Iraq from the outside world, And cancelled any role for Iraq in the global and Arab art , except the talent that smuggled out of Iraq and have lived life according to the Western model or according to the host country.

7. Falsification of the old historic buildings and Architectures in Iraq by subject them of the symbolism of the arrogant dictator, whether by his name or by many his photos that filled horizons.

8. Falsification of history by rewrite it according to ideology of ruling authority.

### **Cultural genocide committed by ISIS In Mosul North of Iraq:**

1. Burn the Mar Matta Church.
2. Taken some Churchs as military barracks.
3. The Demolition of Mujahid Al Ddin Mosque dating back to the sixth century of Hijra.
4. The Demolition of the Tomb of Ibn Al Atheer.
5. The Demolition of the Tombs of the Prophets, such as Younis and Sheat tombs.
6. The destruction of ancient Sinjar minaret.
7. . The destruction of parts of Nergal Gate, and smashing winged bulls.
8. Bulldozing Al Hader city, one of world heritage site.
9. Blow up ancient city of Nimrud.
10. Theft of rare manuscripts, and precious antiques, and sold in order to finance their terrorist acts.
11. Destruction and theft relics preserved in Mosul museum.

### **Methodological Plans for Rebuilding of Marshes Genocide Memory**

The research aims to document the tragic events that occurred in the marshes in the eighties and nineties of the last century in order to prepare a database that provides information for analysis, interpretation and evaluation. This information base takes two forms: digital and paper, to facilitate access to information, whether by technological methods or by classical methods.

Building the memory of the marshes, and the historical turns that took place in them, from prosperity to desertification, and a gradual return again, but without ambition, constitutes a protection for the world heritage, not only the Iraqi one.

The study can be used to suggest effective solutions to develop the marshes and rehabilitate them environmentally and irrigationally, and to develop and rehabilitate their inhabitants psychologically and economically, and to civilize them, and to deal with the marshes as a world heritage recognized by UNESCO.

The research seeks to establish global concepts associated with the description and interpretation of genocide, mass killing and forced displacement, and the research will include a classification of scientific activities that assist in its achievement, to include:

1. Direct interviews with survivors and returnees of forced migration

2. Audio and video recordings.

3. Field studies (questionnaires, and statistics) of the marsh dwellers who are currently in the marshes.

4. Using technological means to rebuild the memory of the marshes, such as Internet programs and computer programs that simulate the original voices of the victims, to tell short stories about the lives of the victims, and the environmental changes that occurred in the marshes, starting from depriving them of a water source and ending with desertification, loss of livestock and fisheries, environmental imbalance and climate changes. .

5. Building an information base to establish the nucleus of the Marshes Museum in the city of Nasiriyah, using digital methods for preservation and exhabitation.

The research will classify the types of genocide that occurred in the marshes and provide statistical data on the type of lost and losses suffered by the Iraqi due to the extermination of the marshes, and these genocides can be classified as follows:

Physical genocide

Environmental genocide

Biological genocide

Cultural genocide

Political genocide

Perhaps some of these types of genocides were not included in the Genocide Convention approved by the United Nations in 1948. Therefore, the research presents proposals for classifying genocides according to cultural environments and political systems.

Research Question

What are the appropriate mechanisms and ways to build the memory of the genocide of the Marshes, and how we can identify the historical context of that memory, as part of the global heritage , and how do we identify the environmental, biological and human diversity that flourished in that environment as a social environment also with its own arts, customs, literature and traditions???

## **The Context Of Question**

After more than two decades of the atrocities that occurred to the marshes and their inhabitants, the events have not been reconstructed, processed historically, and documented according to the procedures of historical verification. The problem is that the events have become part of history, and many survivors of the genocide have died, who have suffered forcible displacement, the fight against their livelihoods, and the confiscation of their money. The documentation process has faced serious difficulties and challenges, including with regard to the credibility of information collected orally from personal interviews, including with regard to the scarcity of government documents that explicitly refer to the goal of draining the marshes, expelling their inhabitants, destroying their natural environment, and transforming them from nature reserves for animals, birds and various plants into a barren desert. Not suitable for agricultural or animal production. How can we mitigate these obstacles and bypass some of them by creating a special archive for the destruction of the marshes and the genocide that the

population and the vital and natural environment have been exposed to? How do we transform the marshes into a historical text that records the various stages of life in them, and how can the historical text be formulated through which the memory of the marshes can be preserved, including the flourishing and biological diversity, and then the genocide of its inhabitants and its ecological and biological diversity?

## **Research aims**

The research is consistent with the objectives of understanding the history and current status of Iraq, preserving Iraq's heritage and its environmental, social and population diversity, especially that the marshes are now listed on the World Heritage List, and helping to achieve justice and promote social peace, coexistence, tolerance and acceptance of the other, and most importantly is Benefiting from the past in understanding the present and the need to transcend it by building peace and achieving justice. One of the objectives of the UNESCO Chair for Genocide Prevention Studies is to study and understand history in order to promote peace in the current society, and to study and understand genocides by identifying their causes and circumstances in order to overcome them and prevent their recurrence.

## **Research Outputs**

- Workshops
- Seminars and conferences
- View on the website
- Include them in the curricula of university students
- The media

## **How is proposal directly and primarily relevant to addressing these challenges in Iraq?**

The serious challenge facing Iraq is the security challenge due to the spread of violence and crimes that threaten peace. Therefore, the research outputs contribute to achieving peaceful coexistence by addressing the historical imbalance that the society has been exposed to due to the prevailing culture that justifies violence. By understanding history, we can overcome the obstacles of the present. We turn challenges into opportunities for dialogue and understanding, and address the social diseases that destroy society, the most important of which is the disease of genocide, which is justified by cultural violence.

---

## **References**

- <sup>i</sup> Asoka De Z. Gunawardana, Contributions by international criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to development of the definition of genocide, proceeding of the Annual meeting (American society of international law), Vol. 94(APRIL 5-8, 2000), p.277.
- <sup>ii</sup> Adam Jones, GENOCIDE, A Comprehensive Introduction, Second Edition published 2011, Routledge, p.13.
- <sup>iii</sup> Eric D. Weitz and Robert M. Hayden, Comment: On the Meaning of Genocide Denial, Slavic Review, Vol. 67, No. 2 (summer, 2008) p.415-418.
- <sup>iv</sup> M. Karin, The Limits Of Trauma Discourse, women Anfal Survivors in Kurdestab-Iraq. Klaus Schwarz Verlag Berlin, Germany, first edition, 2014. Pp.94-96.

---

<sup>v</sup> Beth V. Schaak, The Crime of Political Genocide: Repairing the Genocide Convention 's Blind Spot, the Yale Law Journal, Vol. 106, No. 7(May, 1997), pp. 2259-2291.