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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL
FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT
COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Note verbale dated 4 March 1981 from the Permanent Mission
of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan addressed to the Chairman
of the Commission on Human Rights

" The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan presents its compliments to His Excellency The Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights and, at the request of His Excellency The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has the honour to enclose herewith a memorandum containing confessions given by two terrorists who were arrested in Jordan lately.

The confessions give a detailed description of a massacre which took place at Palmyra prison in Syria on 27 June, 1980. The criminals confess to having participated at the massacre which resulted in killing more than 500 people.

The two terrorists are members of a terrorist gang of five which was sent to assassinate the Prime Minister of Jordan. The terrorists were arrested and have confessed to being directly responsible for implementing the plot; they also confessed to belonging to the Defence Battalions in Syria.

It would be appreciated if arrangements are made to distribute the enclosure to the distinguished members of the Commission on Human Rights.

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan avails itself of this opportunity to renew to His Excellency The Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration."

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EXCERPTS OF THE CONFESSIONS OF
AKRAM ALI BISHANI AND ISSA IBRAHIM FAYYAD,
REGARDING PALMYRA PRISON MASSACRE.

Excerpts of the Confessions of
Akram Ali Bishani and Issa Ibrahim Fayyad,
regarding Palmyra prison massacre.

Note: Akram Ali Bishani and Issa Ibrahim Fayyad are two members of the terrorist gang of five, which was sent to Jordan from Syria to assassinate the Prime Minister of Jordan. The terrorists were arrested, and below are excerpts from their confessions regarding mass killing which was committed in the massacre in Palmyra prison. (Translation from the Arabic original.)

A. CONFESSIONS OF AKRAM ALI BISHANI

Question: What are the operations which you were entrusted with during your service at the Defence Battalions (Saraya Al-Difa'a, a special brigade of the Syrian army)?

Answer: I was entrusted with two operations.

Question: What was the first operation?

Answer: The operation of Palmyra prison on June 26, 1980. On the dawn of the next day after the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate President Hafez Assad we were awakened at 3 a.m. and told that there was a meeting in full battledress with weapons. We met at the hall and were taken to the cinema hall at the 40th brigade, and there we were met by brigadier Mouieen Nassif, chief of the brigade. He addressed us saying that "the Moslem brothers do not differentiate between alawite and sunni Moslems and Christians, they are killing people, and yesterday they tried to assassinate the President. Therefore, today you will be attacking their largest centre which is Palmyra

prison". Then he asked who did not want to fight, and nobody raised his hand because it was a military order. We were told to mount in the cars and so we did in a group estimated to be of nearly 82 persons and then we reached the old Mazzeh airport. There we were met by a group of the 138th brigade which is one of the brigades of the Defence Battalions led by brigadier Ali Deeb, an alawite from Lattakia. Awaiting for us was also ten helicopter planes. We mounted the planes led by the commander of the 138th brigade, brigadier Suliman Mustafa, an alawite, there was with us also three officers from the 40th brigade, they are captain Yaser Bakeer, an alawite from Hama and captain Munir Darwish, an alawite, and captain Abdallah, also alawite. The aeroplanes moved towards Palmyra and we reached there at about 6.30 a.m. of the same day. We disembarked from the planes and were divided into two groups: an attack group and another group that remained at the airport. The group due to go to the prison was transported in a truck, in the prison we were divided into six smaller groups or more, i.e. my group was of about eleven persons, and I think that the total number of those who went to the prison was about 60 soldiers. My group was led by captain Munir Darwish, they opened a dormitory door, wherein there was about 60 to 70 persons. I heard that one of those killed had taken a gun of my colleague, whose name was corporal Skandar Ahmed, and went towards him and saw him. Then somebody called me and asked for ammunition. When I enquired why, he said, "there is one who has not died yet, and we want to machine-gun him". The total of those whom I machine-gunned was about 15 persons; the total of those killed in the prison of the Moslem brothers was about 550 persons. Those killed from the battalion was one only and two wounded. Then we went out and washed our hands from the blood.

Question: How long did the operation take?

Answer: It took about half an hour in the midst of bombing and the shouts of "great is God". Then we embarked on the planes, moved towards the old Mazzeh airport and there the group of the 138th brigade, which is a

branch of the Defence Battalions, went to its headquarters and the 40th brigade group went to its headquarters. Waiting for us was brigadier Mouieen Nassif, the commander of the brigade, who thanked us for our efforts and condoled us on the death of our colleague and told us to go back to our work, which we did.

Question: You have explained about your role but did not tell us about the role of your colleagues, that is those who took part in the operation.

Answer: For example, Mohammed Ammar, who is in charge of guarding the residence of brigadier Mouieen Nassif, told me that he machine-gunned at the same dormitory. Corporal Ibrahim Mounes, an alawite from Misyat region, also told me that he machine-gunned and did not know how many but he said he did.

Question: He did not specify how many he machine-gunned?

Answer: No, he did not. There was also Ibrahim Mukanna with captain Raif Abdallah. Ibrahim Mukanna is an alawite corporal from Jabda region in the governate of Lattakia, and he used to inspect the prisoners with captain Abdallah.

Question: Alright, after you returned from the prison, did you receive any instructions?

Answer: Brigadier Mouieen Nassif said that the operation should not be made known, i.e. it should remain confidential and secret.

Question: With regard to Palmyra prison, how was the environment of the prison before you undertook the operation?

Answer: It was quiet, there were no sounds and there was nothing, before our entry everything was in order, nobody stopped us from entering, the police were on guard standing by the door; the chief of police and some police were in the hall doing some inspection work, inspecting the prisoners.

Question: They were inspecting the prisoners?

Answer: Yes, before we started the operation.

B. CONFESSIONS OF ISSA IBRAHIM FAYYAD, A CORPORAL OF THE DEFENCE BATTALIONS,
NO. 956982

Question: What were the operations with which you were entrusted during your service at the Defence Battalions?

Answer: I was entrusted with two operations, the first was attacking Palmyra prison and the second was inside Jordan.

Question: What was the first operation?

Answer: The first operation was attacking Palmyra prison, after the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate President Hafez Assad on 26 June, 1980. On the second day we were awakened from our bedrooms at about 3.30 a.m. and were told that there was a meeting at the cinema hall, which is at the brigade headquarters, to be attended in full battledress. We went out and reached the cinema hall, other groups started arriving, the total number from the 40th brigade was about 100 soldiers with three officers, then the chief of the brigade met with us. He said, "the Moslem brothers have killed officers, they have killed dignitaries (sheikhs), they have killed doctors and at last they tried to kill President Assad. Now we want to entrust you with the first fighting operation". After that we left the 40th brigade with cars and arrived at Mazzeh airport where there was a group of the 138th brigade estimated at 100 soldiers. The 138th brigade is headed by brigadier Ali Deeb, an alawite from Lattakia region. There were also 9 helicopter planes, they gathered us in groups, each

group with an officer in charge, we embarked on the planes, each plane carried about 24 persons. We left Mazzeh airport and the chief of the operation was brigadier Ali Deeb, an alawite from Lattakia district. We left for Palmyra airport at about 5 a.m. and reached there at about 6 a.m. or ten past 6 a.m. They gathered us there and the commander of the operation met with the officers. He asked them to give the soldiers a $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour rest. After the rest we were gathered in groups. The 40th brigade was in three groups, each group headed by an officer, then they started selecting the soldiers who would enter Palmyra prison in a haphazard manner, for example if the officer knew the name of somebody he might call him, "so-and-so come", but if he did not know the name he would indicate by his hand for the person to come. They selected about 80 soldiers and also selected about 20 soldiers to guard the planes. The rest were left as reserve at the airport. After that the soldiers who were selected to do the operation inside the prison, about 80 in number, moved in the form of groups in the car to inside the prison. $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour after their entry from the outer gate we started hearing shooting, explosions and bombing, about seven bombs exploded. The shooting took place for about $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour. The soldiers went out of the prison as they had entered, in groups.

Question: From which group were you?

Answer: I was from the reserve group which stayed at the airport. After the soldiers left the prison, some of them were stained with blood. I know the names of those who had blood on their clothes, they are captain Abdallah, captain Munir Darwish, corporal Ali Mohammed Mousa. Then we all embarked on the planes and returned to Mazzeh airport. We reached Mazzeh about 12 noon and had one wounded soldier. Captain Yusef Yaser Bakeer from the 40th brigade told all the soldiers that the commander of the brigade would like to meet with us in the cinema hall. We were instructed that if we were to be asked about the wounded person to say that a bullet had hit the wall and come back to wound the soldier.

Question: Did you meet together with the soldiers of the 138th brigade?

Answer: The 40th brigade alone, the others went to their camp. The participants from the 40th brigade met at the cinema hall and the commander of the brigade thanked them.

Question: That is brigadier Mouieen Nassif?

Answer: Brigadier Mouieen Nassif addressed a word of thanks and said that they had now made a glorious manly job in spite of the fact that this was the first time they were entrusted with such an operation. After that we left the cinema hall and everyone was talking with his colleague. I was with a colleague of mine, he is corporal Ali Mohammad Mousa from the regiment of brigadier Mouieen Nassif and he was one of those who had entered the prison. He said they entered in groups, each group commanded by an officer; he also told me that they used to enter the rooms where the prisoners resided, and shoot them directly without any question or any discussion. I asked him if the prisoners used to plead, and he said they used to plead and say "God is great" and they used to say "for the sake of Allah (God), for the sake of Mohammed, don't kill us". He also told me that they had not listened to all these pleads, but used to kill immediately. I asked him about the number of those killed inside the prison and he said that the total number of those killed was about 500 or 600 from the prisoners who were inside.

Question: Whom do you know of those who took part in the operation?

Answer: Corporal Naser Abdallah from either Tartous or Lattakia, I do not know, he is alawite. I know corporal Ghassan Shehadeh from Lattakia district and corporal Talal Mohye Deen Ahmed (alawite) and corporal Nazih Baalool (alawite) from Homs region and corporal Mousa Issa (alawite) from Homs region and corporal Jumaa Ahmad (alawite) from Lattakia. Those are the people who took part.

Question: Who were the officers who took part?

Answer: The officers who took part were captain Abdallah from the infantry regiment of the 40th brigade and captain Munir Darwish from the infantry regiment of the 40th brigade from Lattakia region (alawite) and captain Yaser Bakeer from the 40th brigade from Hama district.