

Part II

Humanitarian Crises

Chapter 7

Forced Displacement and Concentration Camps As a Civilizing Offensive¹

A Case Study on the Mass Deportation of the Kurdish People Between 1976 and 1986

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The Ba'ath Party destroyed thousands of Kurdish rural areas and deported its residents to complexes in order to restrict Kurdish autonomy. The alleged plan of the Ba'ath Party was to "develop the northern region," but was in fact a road map in the frame of a process of genocide. Here, the Ba'ath Party pursued a political and ideological strategy to succeed in its plan in order to terminate any kind of political, economic, and cultural freedom.

The deportation and gathering of people in camps all around the Kurdistan Region of Iraq² (KRI) was implemented under various pretexts following the collapse of the armed Kurdish political movement in 1975. This process of forced displacement of wide rural areas did not receive any attention from the international community or international human rights organizations. It had different dimensions in the policy of the Iraqi government under the leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (ABSP). One can find these dimensions in Ba'ath Party literature, including the Ba'ath Party's constitution, which was issued in 1947.

The Ba'ath Party evacuated the Kurdish rural areas under the allegation of modernization of the Kurdish people and the facilitation of their lives in modern complexes. This begs the question, to what extent is this argument valid? If it is valid, then why were the villages destroyed, the targeted areas completely scorched, and the people humiliated and violently forced to leave their homes? What was the difference between the modern com-

¹ It is over 30 years since the theoretical concept of the civilising offensive (*het beschavings of-fensief*) emerged from Amsterdam and the work of Norbert Elias.

² After 2003, the Iraqi Kurdistan region was ascertained in the Iraqi constitution, but it is confined to around half of the actual size of Iraqi Kurdistan. Therefore, I am not using the term the "Kurdistan region," as the deportation process included all Kurdish areas in Iraqi Kurdistan and not merely the term coined in the Iraqi constitution.

plexes and the villages? The argument here is that the procedure of the evacuation of rural areas was a stage in a larger genocidal process, including the extermination of an entire way of life and habitat. Thus, according to the displaced people, the claim that this was for the development and modernization of Kurdish rural areas, does not exceed the ideological propaganda. It is apparent in the difficult reality of life experienced by the deportees, as well as the security reality that was imposed on the residents of these complexes, and the restriction on their freedom. Additionally, these camps have been easily utilized as part of the “extermination mobile killing operations in extermination camps.”³

This study will attempt to understand only one stage of genocide in a sociological framework in order to understand the motivation and explanation of the Ba’ath Party for their actions. Thus, a figurative approach will be used in an attempt to handle the hidden pages of this process and give it enough consideration. As explained by Alan Whitehorn: “genocide is not an accident. Rather, it is premeditated and follows recognizable patterns.”⁴ Hence, it is important to conceptualize the process of the evacuation of the rural areas from any kind of population and its appropriateness for human life.

Thus, sociology can form a methodology for linking the past and present, and it can recognize all elements in this process. In other words, this framework is used to understand Iraqi state policy against non-Arabs, as well as the circumstances before, during, and after the process of forced displacement. Aside from official documents of the Iraqi state that constitute evidence for the forced deportation, this author has performed interviews with many of the displaced people who experienced this firsthand. Around 40 years have passed, and many of these villages have yet to be rebuilt, and the economic and ecological impact is visible to all observers.

Civilizing Offense

This research is an attempt to use the theoretical framework of civilizing offensive to examine the deportation process of the Kurds. This approach has been taken for specific reasons: If we accept the argument that the Kurds were removed from their homes in order to develop the northern

³ Federico Finchelstein. “The Holocaust Canon: Rereading Raul Hilberg.” *New German Critique* 96 (2005): 3-48.

⁴ Alan Whitehorn. The steps and stages of genocide: Genocide is not an accident. Rather, it is premeditated and follows recognizable, 26(3), 16. doi:10.1093/hgs/5.3.337, 2010.

region under the name of “campaign of the development of the northern region” and building “modern villages,” this means that the Ba’athists would have attempted to “civilize” or “Arabize” them in these modern camps, as Ali Hassan al-Majid argued:

I am keeping them close to me, to let them hear my voice to implant in their minds what I want of thinking, culture and consciousness.⁵

However, the Ba’athists did not conceal their “national ideal” of pan-Arab-centrism in the form of “one Arab Nation, with an eternal message.” These Ba’athist national ideals are close to those of the Nazi national ideal and “were also more exclusive than other national ideals in emphasizing the primacy of one race and one nation.”⁶ Civilizing offensive is a theoretical framework that has been derived from Norbert Elias’s work. It has been applied “to various historical civilizing projects aimed at bringing about cultural shifts and inculcating lasting habits in working-class populations deemed to be “immoral” or “uncivilized.”⁷ Additionally, Ryan Powell describes it, as he concludes: “The term ‘civilizing offensive’ is used by Dutch sociologists and historians to refer to a wide range of phenomena, from nineteenth-century bourgeois efforts to elevate the lower classes out of their poverty and ignorance and convince them of the importance of domesticity and a life of virtue, to the oppression of popular culture in early modern times and, in general, “the attack on behavior presumed to be immoral or uncivilized.”⁸

Such an offensive can take many forms and lead to a variety of consequences, including what has been termed “stolen generation.” Amanda Rohloff has used this description for the Australian stolen generation, as she states, “Some aboriginal children ‘in Australia’ were forcibly removed from their families in order to ‘civilize’ them to become more like the European colonists.”⁹ The Australian authority’s “stolen generation,” is similar to the Iraqi authority’s deportation of tens of thousands of villagers

⁵ Majid, M. 2009 The cruelty of Saddam Hussein blog “the heroic of Anfal operations” the fifth part, al-quswat lada Saddam Hussein http://saddamscruelty.blogspot.co.uk/2009/04/blog-post_1809.html

⁶ Jonathan Fletcher. *Violence and civilization: An introduction to the work of Norbert Elias*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

⁷ Ryan Powell. “The Theoretical Concept of the ‘Civilising Offensive’(Beschavings offensief): Notes on Its Origins and Uses.” *Human Figurations* 2, no. 2, 2013

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Amanda Rohloff. “Shifting the focus? Moral panics as civilizing and decivilizing processes.” Routledge, 2011.

to the new forced camps (called Modern camps), under the allegation of civilization; although in reality these were concentration camps. In this regard, van Krieken elaborates on this point by describing a civilizing offense as any type of encroachment on the lives of others and their way of existence. In addition, Robert van Krieken has argued, "Central here is the question of colonialism and imperialism, the ways in which nation states have established a brutal and violent relationship between their own 'civilization' and the supposedly 'barbaric' cultures of subjected peoples."¹⁰ Furthermore, "it is important to supplement, systematically, the concept of civilizing processes with that of civilizing offensives, to take account of the active, conscious and deliberate civilizing projects of both various powerful groups within societies and whole societies in relation to other regions of the world."¹¹ Hence, during a civilizing offensive, the relationship becomes counterproductive and centrifugal between the civilizing process and the de-civilizing process. In the same field, but from another aspect, the resort to aggression and the discharge of the Kurdish inhabited region, according to Fletcher, can be attributed to a decline in power and identity issues, as he argues, "The deeply conditioned responses of aggressiveness and destructiveness in crisis situations prevalent in Nazi Germany were the result of a long intergenerational tradition bound up with successive defeats, a decline in power, uncertain national identity and an orientation towards the past."¹²

Additionally, the Arab defeat at the Six-Day War in 1967, according to al-Hamdani, insulted Arab dignity.¹³ In the same notion, it was considered by Ba'athists to be one of the reasons for the Ba'ath Party's coup. In order to return the dignity of the Arabs (the Ba'ath manifesto of the July, 17 and 30, 1968). On the other hand, after the defeat of the Kurdish Gulan's armed movement for Kurdish rights in 1974,¹⁴ the BP's Arabization process continued and systematically started to discharge the Kurdish areas. So, why did the BP engage in violence as a passage to reach its ideological goals? If Arab dignity had been assaulted in 1967, and the BP attempted to return Arab dignity through the coup of 1968, what happened in 1974

¹⁰ Robert van Krieken. *Norbert Elias (Key Sociologists)*. Routledge, London, New York, 1998.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jonathan Fletcher. *Violence and civilization: An introduction to the work of Norbert Elias*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

¹³ H Al-Hamdani. "Years of hell: Forty years of BP rule in Iraq, 1963-2003, the years of heal - 40 years of the Baath's authority in Iraq 1963-2003." *Vaxjo: Vesbun Media Sweden*, 2007.

¹⁴ Michael M Gunter. *The A to Z of the Kurds*. Vol. 35. Scarecrow Press, 2009.

that led to a large portion of the Kurdish inhabited areas to be affected? Here, Fletcher is drawing on the situation in Germany that is very close to that of Iraq, “the deeply conditioned responses of aggressiveness and destructiveness in crisis situations prevalent in Nazi Germany was the result of a long inter-generational tradition bound up with successive defeats, a decline in power, uncertain national identity, and an orientation towards the past.”¹⁵

What is notable here is that the situation in Iraq has many similarities with Germany. The Arabs were defeated in the war with Israel in 1967, and the Iraqi Army was executing a dirty war against the Kurds between 1974 and 1975. Moreover, Iraq gained victory over the Kurdish armed movement in 1975 and re-occupied all the liberated areas. The Ba’ath Party was attempting to build its authoritarian system and to exclude and marginalize the non-Arabs through a specific policy, influenced by other authoritarian and tyrannical systems like Germany. Under these circumstances, the most critical point is the essence of the interrelationships that connected the Kurds to the majority of the Iraqi population or Iraqi institutions. Was this relationship between the Kurds and the Arab majority based on citizenship, or was it based on a specific relationship involving the so-called occupied people and the occupier? On the other hand, the interrelationship between successive Iraqi authorities, particularly the Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party, and the Kurds, needs to be considered.

It is important to present the background to the situation before delving into details of the research, and so the following is a short introduction to the emergence of Iraq as a state, and as an official member of the League of Nations. This importance of the Iraqi position goes back to the importance of the essence of the relationship between the Kurds and the state of Iraq, because the Kurds were forcibly colonized and annexed to Iraq in 1926. The story of annexation was dependent on two stages:

The first stage was the occupation of the region after the collapse of the Ottoman sultanate, as has been argued by Zeynep Arıkanlı, “Post-World War I (WWI) witnessed the breakup of Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and saw an ensuing transition from massive multinational political entities to nation-states.”¹⁶ Accordingly, during the treaty

¹⁵ Jonathan Fletcher. *Violence and civilization: An introduction to the work of Norbert Elias*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

¹⁶ Zeynep Arıkanlı. “British Legacy and Evolution of Kurdish Nationalism in Iraq (1918-1926): What Significance the Mosul Question.” *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 4, 2010.

of Sevres in 1920, it was confirmed that the Kurds had the right to an independent existence similar to the rest of the population in the region. In this regard, Carole A. O’Leary said, “following World War I and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds were promised their own country under the terms of the 1920 Treaty of Sevres only to find the offer rescinded under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.”¹⁷ The second stage represented the division of the region within a new structure under the surveillance of colonialism. This division, due to the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, was followed by the annexation of Mosul province¹⁸ to two other Ottoman provinces—Baghdad and Basra, and nothing was put in place to bring these two provinces closer together. In this regard, Hanna Batatu argued, “Iraq was composed of plural, relatively isolated, and often virtually autonomous city-states and tribal confederations, urban ‘class’ ties tended to be in essence local ties rather than ties on the scale of the whole country.”¹⁹ This argument, from one of the most important Arab historians and insiders concerning the current history of Iraq, is indicative of several decisive factors regarding social structures and the demographic designation of Iraqi communities within important key areas of isolated, autonomous city-states, and tribal confederations.

Dependent on this divisional designation of the region by Western colonialists, the fate of the Kurds was left to the regional colonials. Additionally, it is impossible to understand BP’s conduct in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region without examining the inter-relationship between colonial forces and the occupied population. This issue, present throughout decades of the Kurdish struggle for freedom, has not been conceptualized and did not result in a strategy being formed by the Kurdish political movement. Consequently, because the Iraqi authorities were not considered to be colonial rulers who dealt with the Kurdish people as occupiers, the issues remained incomplete.

The critical relationship between the established “colonial” power and the indigenous people considered outsiders, can be described as a civilizing relationship. We can consider this a leading frame of thought for the state

¹⁷ Carole A O’Leary. “The Kurds of Iraq: Recent history, future prospects.” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2002): 17-29.

¹⁸ In the administration system of the Ottomans, Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, were a Vilayat, forming one of the autonomous regions which followed the Ottoman sultanate’s authority. A Vilayat includes more than a city and is in contrast to a province.

¹⁹ Hanna Baṭāṭū. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq’s Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba’thists, and Free Officers*. Princeton University Press, 1978.

of Iraq and its successive administrations, which have attempted to assimilate all components into the hegemonic culture of Sunni-pan-Arabism in order to build a nation state. Thus, the Iraqi BP authority as an inheritor of previous Iraqi authorities, and as a type of Arab nationalist party, in order to complete what its predecessors failed (building a nation state), pursued a specific aggressive policy towards the Kurds. Additionally, as Mufti and Bouckaert conclude, "Since the 1930s, but particularly from the 1970s onwards, successive Iraqi administrations have forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of ethnic Kurds, Turkomans (a Turkish-speaking Iraqi minority), and Assyrians from northern Iraq, and repopulated the area with Arabs moved from central and southern Iraq."²⁰

Accordingly, and in agreement with the interviewees, the behavior of the Iraqi army, its militias and the Iraqi authorities, did not differ from an occupying army, and the procedures carried out by the administrative authorities in the region were no different than procedures followed by the colonial authorities in the occupied territories. However, the Kurdish dilemma is its inability to conceptualize its situation and designate its occupier. This type of situation has been explained by Frederick Cooper in his book "Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History," as he cites Ashis Nandy's argument that "history is inseparable from its imperialist origins, that it necessarily imposes the imperialist's understanding of people's past over their own."²¹ Rewriting history, which Saddam Hussein²² attempted to do, could be the extension of this attitude.

The Process of Evacuation

Alongside different kinds of genocide procedures, three kinds of deportation were in process: firstly, against the Faili Kurds to secure Baghdad and the surrounding area. Saddam Hussein openly discussed this process widely in the political report of the eighth region Conference for Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party in 1974, under the allegation of the threat from foreigners. The most reiterated justification in this report is the "appropriate treatment of the dangerous foreigners."²³ The second process was the

²⁰ Bouckaert, Peter, and Hania Mufti. "Claims in Conflict-Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq." Human Rights Watch, 2004

²¹ Frederick Cooper. "Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History." 2005

²² He was Iraqi president from July 16, 1979 until April 9, 2003; he was sentenced to death, and hanged on the first day of Eid ul-Adha on December 30, 2006.

²³ BASP "Political report of the eighth region Conference for Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party." *Al-thawra press*, Baghdad, 1974.

deportation of the Kurdish residents of mixed areas in Kirkuk, Khanaqin, and Shingal, and their replacement with emigrant Arabs in order to narrow down the Kurdish territory. In this regard, the Iraqi Arab author, Hamin al-Hamdani, said,

Ba'athists resorted to Arabizing the province of Kirkuk by bringing Arab tribes in order to change the nature of the demography. They also encouraged Arab citizens from various parts of Iraq to live in Kirkuk, and pledged to give each Arab family that agreed to live in Kirkuk a piece of land for free with a grant of ten thousand dinars to build a house. They did the same thing in Khanaqin, Sinjar, Sheikhan and where they construct resident camps under Arabic names to accommodate the Arab tribes" (Al-Hamdani, 2007:91). In a similar direction, al-Hamdani, argues, "Ba'athists prevented the Kurdish citizens from building new homes and even the restoration of the old buildings. They came to falsify the census records of 1957, which was agreed to be adopted as the basis for the census."²⁴

The third, and largest campaign, was the evacuation of the areas adjacent to the borders to a distance of 15 to 50 KM, which was concluded in the third act of the Algeria Agreement, "accordingly, the two parties shall restore security and mutual confidence along their joint borders."²⁵ In this regard, the UN report concludes, "In the mid- and late 1970s, the regime again moved against the Kurds, forcibly evacuating at least a quarter of a million people from Iraq's borders with Iran and Turkey, destroying their villages to create a cordon sanitaire along these sensitive frontiers."²⁶

After consideration, the Iraqi authority claimed that in order to develop the northern region, they would build modern camps for local villagers. This allegation started under the name "The campaign of the development of the northern region" and has also been called "the modern villages."²⁷ The UN report also confirmed, "In their propaganda, the Iraqis commonly refer to them as "modern villages;" in this report, they are generally

²⁴ H Al-Hamdani. "Years of hell: Forty years of BP rule in Iraq, 1963-2003, the years of heal - 40 years of the Baath's authority in Iraq 1963-2003." *Vaxjo: Veshun Media Sweden*, 2007

²⁵ IMCM *Why Algiers convention were canceled between Iran and Iraq*, Boçî Rêkewtinnameî Cezair Le Nêwan Êraq u Êran Helwe_ayewe. Iraqi Ministry of culture and media edn. Baghdad: Al-Hurriya House Publishing, 1981

²⁶ Human Rights Watch/Middle East *Iraq's crime of genocide: the Against the Kurds*. Human Rights Watch, 1995

²⁷ O Muhammad. *The Anfal military campaigns in its eight stages*, Pelamare Serbaziyekany Anfal le Heshit Qonaxda. Sulemani: General Directorate of Libraries, 2013

described as “complexes.”²⁸ The Iraqi claim was that these areas, despite being far away from the cities, deserve prosperity like the rest of Iraq, such as better schools, hospitals, and accommodation. “In Iraq, there was no overall policy of forced assimilation to the Arab majority, but there was rather the deliberate annihilation of traditional Kurdish rural life and its economic basis by the wholesale destruction of Kurdish villages and the deportation of their inhabitants (i.e., those that were not killed) to strategic villages, ‘new towns,’ or concentration camps.”²⁹

Here, an important gesture in Van Bruinessen’s research is that the deportation did not include Arabs living in villages, in houses made from reeds and in areas that were barren and dry. They had no clean water supply and no modern accommodations, unlike the Kurdish villages that were mostly green, with flowing water from the mountains, agricultural zones and orchards. The Kurdish villages had strong houses made from stone and mud, and many of these houses contained aesthetic designs and various inscriptions. In this regard, Michael Field described the un-cultivation of most of the land in central and southern Iraq, as follows: “Traveling through central and southern Iraq one is struck by how uncultivated most of the land appears.”³⁰ Despite this, there is no indication that any Iraqi Arab villages were exposed to such deportation until the invasion of U.S. troops in Iraq in 2003. Thus, the UN report confirms, “Most of the displaced Kurds were relocated into *mujamma’at*,³¹ crude new settlements located on the main highways in army-controlled areas of Iraqi Kurdistan.”³² Thus, a military process was implemented to dominate the Kurdish population living in rural areas. This means that the Iraqi authority’s intention was different than what they had announced, which was to develop the northern region.

²⁸ Human Rights Watch/Middle East *Iraq’s crime of genocide: Against the Kurds*. Human Rights Watch, 1995

²⁹ Martin Van Bruinessen. “Genocide of the Kurds.” *The Widening Circle of Genocide. Genocide: a Critical Bibliographic Review* 3 (1994): 165-191, 1994

³⁰ Michael Field. *Inside the Arab world*. Harvard University Press, 1994.

³¹ *Mujamma’at* is an Arabic word for a complex, referring to bringing people in a place together.

³² Human Rights Watch/Middle East *Iraq’s crime of genocide: Against the Kurds*. Human Rights Watch, 1995

The Practical Side

This research deals with different situations in two dissimilar places in society during two distinctive periods of time. Therefore, to address this, 10 interviews have been conducted with people who have spent a significant part of their lives in their birthplace, before being subjected to forced deportation from their hometowns to the so-called “modern complexes.” The important factors in these interviews are the differences and advantages between these two dissimilar places, including the psychological position of those who were exposed to the deportation. These people spent the first stage of their lives in their villages, and later moved to the complexes.

The deportations date back to the years 1977 and 1978, after the collapse of Gulan’s Kurdish military movement and the Algerian agreement between Iraq and Iran in 1974. In order to compare the villages and complexes’ accommodation, an attempt was made to discover the differences between Kurdish villages and complexes. The majority of the Kurdish villages had police stations, schools, health centers, mosques and religious schools, and village associations including projects for water supply. Many of these villages and surrounding areas were linked to the cities via motorways. According to the interviewees, the only shortage was electricity, and some of the villages were not linked by motorways.

Interestingly, according to the interviewees, the only difference between their villages and the government complexes were not the presence of electricity or water projects, but rather the existence of Ba’ath bureaus and security forces. They were afraid of the Ba’ath’s bureaus and security forces inside and around the complexes. These complexes were surrounded by public security, intelligence agencies, special mercenary teams, mercenary forces, and the Iraqi army. In contrast, these people felt completely secure in their own villages. In addition, according to the interviewees, these complexes lacked any type of “civil” attractions such as movie theatres or community halls.

In our questionnaire, the interviewees were given a choice of one or more of the following options:

1. “I have been uprooted and kidnapped”
2. “I felt alienated and very worried”
3. “I felt a lack of respect and a sense of loneliness”

4. "I felt very happy that I was changing my place for the first time in my life."
5. "It was an ordinary event; I do not care if I live here or there. The importance is to live anywhere"
6. "I feel that life's troubles began here"
7. "I felt a severe horror and I am still under the influence of that horror"
8. "Other..."

Here, the interviewees opted for all of the answers, except the fourth and fifth options, and most of them added one or more painful answers. The key words we encountered were: uprooted, kidnapped, alienated, worried, lack of respect, loneliness, troubles and horror, all indicating a real and serious psychological illness. This is a list of the added answers (as described by point eight in the list above):

- "I still re-live those days and I cannot forget those scenes"
- "Although some people have become vigilant, on the other side we faced huge challenges"
- "I felt disappointed because I knew we could not defend ourselves"
- "I felt it was the beginning of our end"
- "I felt shame because I surrendered"
- "On that day I cried a lot, I was depressed for more than a year, but later I was able to save myself from collapse"
- "My husband ended up having a stroke and I suffer from depression"
- "I cannot forget the days of deportation. The images are always in front of my eyes"
- "I cried a lot"
- "They raped us and exterminated us. We will never be the same again"

The interviewees said that the majority of them remained unemployed for long periods of time, exceeding a year's time. According to the interviewees, many of those deported people were depressed or died from the consequences of depression. However, one of the interviewees admitted that he joined the Peshmerga³³ forces after a few weeks in the complexes.

³³ Peshmerga were Kurdish freedom fighters against successive Iraqi governments in the 20th century.

After the uprising of the Kurdish people in 1991 and the liberation of Kurdish areas from state control, many of the deported people returned to their villages. Thus, we asked the interviewees whether they had returned or not. They were given five options in order to find out the causes of returning to the rural areas.

The options were:

1. "Because in the village I felt more calm and free"
2. "In order to manage my possessions and agricultural products"
3. "Because of the harshness of life in these complexes and the new cities"
4. "Because the village is my homeland, all of my memories are there"
5. "Because I could keep worshipping in the village"

The majority, 7 out of the 10 interviewees showed that they returned for more than one reason. Three of the interviewees chose options 1, 2, and 4. The rest of the interviewees had not returned, but had rebuilt their village homes and went back in the summer time. The reasons for not returning were work or children who were studying.

In order to compare the satisfaction of interviewees between their lives in the villages and the complexes, they were asked: "could you remind us of the difference between your life in the village and in the complexes? The interviewees provided various reasons, but all answers pointed to their preference to live in the villages, as shown below.

1. "I always felt homesick."
2. "In fact, the complex was not far away from our area, but because we had been deported by the Ba'athists, they destroyed us on two levels. First, we were disrespected, and second, they have destroyed everything; here were our memories, so they destroyed our memories."
3. "In the village, I felt that I am the son of the land. But here I feel that I have been destroyed. After all these years, I cannot find a taste of life in this complex. I had a big house and my living room was as large as a house in this complex. I had an important position in the community of the village, which I have lost in this complex. In the village, we were working together- with my wife. We were together, but the depression captured her because of the deportation, and two years later she died. And I'm staying scarcely in this life. With her death, my soul died."

4. "We were comfortable in the village, even today, because it is the home of our ancestors. Before the deportation, we made a sacrifice for Pirabab³⁴. We slaughtered 27 animals as a donation. At that moment, we were hit by a rocket from a military airplane but it hit the mountain of Bogaw³⁵. God saved us. So, we resorted to everybody, even God, without any result"
5. "We were dehumanized in the complex, but when we returned, we have restored our humanity"
6. "Here we are owners of our dignity, but in the complex, we were not. If someone is treated so horribly in one a place, and lived in peace in another place, which do you choose?"

The relationship of mankind with the homeland is an intimate and profound relationship. When a person is forced to leave his land, it is like being transplanted and uprooted from their source, as happened to many West Africans who were captured and deported from their homeland into exile and slavery. This shows that people did everything to save their territory from destruction, yet the military campaign was so big that there was no solution.

The process of attempting to forcibly build a nation-state has been repeated in many places around the world. Building a nation state without taking into account the specificities of other components has been shown to lead to different kinds of assimilation and even genocide.

The Ba'athists claimed that the process of deportation was for the development of the Kurdish region because they could not bring government services to remote areas. When we mentioned Ali Hassan al-Majid message, "we will civilize them," our interviewees reacted emotionally, "Through what? By giving us a television to view it and sitting at home unemployed? Civilization is not merely beautiful buildings, even though the homes they had built in the complexes were not suitable for respectable life, the civilization for human beings is to have their own free will. The Ba'athists have taken our will, so we became like poultry."

³⁴ The real name of Pirabab is Faqe Mohammed. He was one of Sheikh Balkan's followers. He is known as a knowledgeable man and is given a lot of respect. His name as Pirabab (old father) is common in the region of Balakayati. His inheritance became the endowment for his grandchildren until today. He was known as a friend of animals, particularly the wild goats, so his grandchildren still do not eat the flesh of these animals.

³⁵ Bogaw is a mountain range located in the foothills of the Hasarrost's mountains.

These people understood the intention of the process of deportation. Thus, they were aware of the consequences of living in these complexes, as one interviewee put it, “In the village we were relying on ourselves to find a piece of bread, but in the complex a lot of people have become mercenaries for money. In the village, there was mutual respect and cooperation, but we have lost many of these values in the complex. So, I do not know what civilization is.” This explanation means that the Ba’athists were successful in their plan to dominate people and to leave them in a chaotic situation. People in the complexes suddenly became unemployed, strangers to each other; they lost their values and the norms of village life. Another interviewee said, “What is civilization if they built libraries, and opened two companies in the region, and built a theatre, we could call it civilization, but the Ba’athists used weapons and told us that [this weapon] is the source of your food [...] is this civilization? The villages were paradise in terms of foliage and the beauty of nature, but in the complex, we were almost drowned in the dust. As a result, we became like a flock of sheep.”

One of the benefits of these complexes for the Iraqi regime was the recruiting of thousands of residents to become mercenaries, and the actions carried out by the Iraqi regime point to a strategic plan of “divide and rule.” Hence, the process of the deportation in itself was one of the stages of genocide, and even if it had led to some positive aspects, this does not mean that what happened was a positive step towards civilization.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to highlight the deportation of the Kurdish rural areas after the collapse of the Kurdish political armed movement in 1975 led by the Ba’ath Party, under the claim of the modernization of the Kurdish people. This deportation process, called the “campaign of the development of the northern region,” formed one of the most aggressive and dangerous stages of genocide throughout the history of Kurds and successive Iraqi authorities, particularly the Ba’ath Party authority.

According to the evidence we gathered from various sources, including from firsthand accounts, this process can be described as a civilizing offensive, considered an aspect of the de-civilization process. Additionally, it was in preparation for the intended strategy of destroying any type of Kurdish autonomy and possible Kurdish prosperity. Through this strategy, the economy of the Kurdish rural areas was destroyed, and the people were forcibly gathered into specific areas and forced to surrender control

over any kind of activities, and to prevent the relationship with the Peshmerga forces. Furthermore, these complexes can be considered prisons, used to facilitate arrests when necessary, as happened to thousands of Barzani Kurds until they were taken to the mass graves in south Iraq. The consequences of this process are still visible in Kurdish society.

