

Abstract:

The paper is an attempt to study one of the tragic events in postwar history and politics of Iraq after 2003. That event is the Speicher massacre of a large number of students, officers and soldiers who were working in the Speicher Military Base in Tikrit. The Speicher massacre of June 2014 is a stark example of one of the atrocious massacres committed against students and members of the Iraqi army at the Tikrit academic air base (Speicher Camp), targeting 1700-2200 soldiers, officers, trainees and volunteers between 12-14 June 2014. The United Nations' report declared that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the operations which took place in the Presidential Palaces Compound were committed with the intention of genocide in the context of the terrorist ISIS organization against the Shia' community in Iraq. The results concluded reasonable belief that these acts can be considered as crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The team working on the Speicher project in collaboration with organization of Speicher victims 1700, the UNESCO chair in the University of Baghdad and the Nahrain network-University College of London-UCL tried to reconstruct what happened in the Speicher massacre through a series of personal interviews with the families of the victims in Baghdad and several Iraqi governorates: Kerbala, Najaf, Diwaniya, Muthana and Dhi Qar. Before that, the team participated in three intensive workshops with the Dhameer institution, a workshop about the ethics of conducting interviews with the families in question and registering the disturbed memory, in addition to using the historical method and the rules of oral history to compose a perspective to write the story of Speicher's victims. Our method depended on recorded oral interviews with the families of the victims and documenting them by televised record, and conducting a questionnaire after completing the personal interview with them.

The paper depended on the results of the interviews with the families of the victims through analyzing of the interviews and questionnaire and comparing them with the official narrative. The team depended on three methods: traditional written history, an interdisciplinary approach and an oral history perspective.

The team prepared the families psychologically by choosing the date and the location preferred by them. Most of the interviews were conducted at the houses of the victims' families just to create a comfortable atmosphere and facilitate recollection of the incidents. The houses of the interviewees were packed with memories through photos and personal belongings that assisted in recollecting the picture within their historical context. Some of the families were received at the headquarters of the Organization Speicher victims

1700. The interviewees were given the freedom to sit in the places that made them most comfortable, and in applying the ethics of oral history and the interviews, the martyrs' families carried on recollecting the incidents that were packed with pain, while remembering what happened and the last words that the families heard from their sons.

The days between 9-14 June of 2014 were filled with fear and anticipation between the victims and their families. These were critical moments that witnessed the climax of the Speicher tragedy when the victims left the camp and walked in long queues or individually looking for a safe haven while being surrounded by ISIS and the tribal movement. Their mobile phones were dying while walking on a long and twisted road, trying to find a safe route to escape. Those feelings filled with pain were conveyed to the victims' families through their mobile phones, which registered the last hours that the victims lived. Those moments covered by the oral interviews were packed with the emotions of the interviewees and their tears in a way different from the questionnaires, which depend on short statistical replies.

The present work will present the families responses through analyzing their replies and comparing them to understand the last moments of the victims. We are looking to continue this kind of studies that depend on the oral history method which is regarded as a new approach to study the critical events of Iraqi contemporary history.