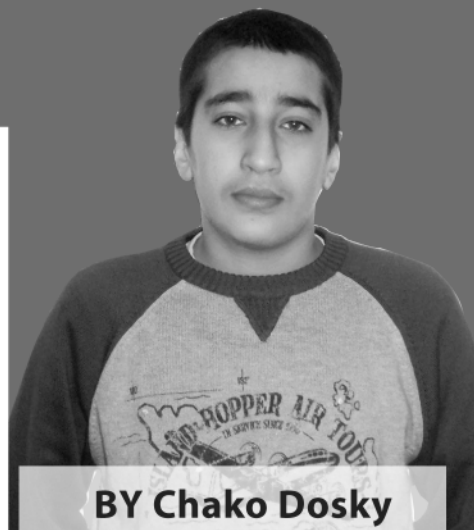


Our Story Through My Mother's Eyes

My mother told me what happened the day she was born, saying:

"The day I was born, our small village in Kurdistan was attacked by the Iraqi regime's troops in the early sixties. Just hours after I was born, my mother had to flee from the village with the rest of the villagers, in search of safety. The journey consisted of too many miles which my mother had to overcome in order to get me and my other siblings away from danger"



BY Chako Dosky

She went on to say ***"my mother was on her own as my father had been detained as a political prisoner by the Iraqi regime due to the fact that he supported the Kurdish movement"***

My mother was told the journey to safety became very challenging and that her mother was also on the brink of dying. At this point she was only a few hours old and was carried for many miles through severe winter weather conditions, as it was December and during this time, Kurdistan's mountains are freezing.

Many times my mother has told me that until this day she does not know how she survived. She said years passed and she grew up in fear, as fear was a daily factor of their lives. For as long as she could remember, the Kurdish people were suffering at the hands of the subsequent Iraqi regimes. Suffering, torture, imprisonment, pain and execution were daily routines for many Kurds. With each day that passed, they were in danger that the next day would be their turn. They had, like many other Kurds, had their house destroyed many times, and had to start building from scratch.

My mother said that the suffering of the Kurds continued for generations: ***"One of the events that will stay in my mind forever was when I had to carry my two-month-old son to safety. This was a time like no other. In 1987, my son and I were subjected to chemical bombardment, although luckily, these were minor affects as the bombs fell at a distance. The Kurds who were more unlucky were those who lived in a nearby city called Halabja, as 5000 of its citizens, from pregnant women, elderly and children were killed. The psychological impact remains with me until this day"***

My mother told me that in 1988, the Iraqi regime started an ethnic cleansing campaign called the Anfal Campaign, which aimed to carry out genocide against all Kurds. My mother's words began to speak louder, as this time she had to carry her own son to safety just like her mother did in the early sixties. She told me that at the time my father was a general of the Kurdish army called Peshmerga (freedom fighters who die for a just cause) and had to stay and defend as much as he could with these forces, whilst the women had to take themselves and their children to a safe land. At this point it was March and the mountains through were still covered in snow from the previous winter.

These were her words: ***"I saw children and elderly people dying, I saw women running out of milk to supply their children, I saw family's running out of food, I saw it all"*** She said that 182,000 Kurds were killed in the area she was escaping from and she had always feared that she would be next. She said ***"The day I was born, my mother had to carry me to safety. I never imagined that one day I would have to go through the same experience and carry my children to safety"***

My mother said all this and I have always wondered how many other people have to go through similar experiences, not just Kurds, but all over the world.

I sometimes feel very sad about the world's superpowers knowing what is happening to victims of war and instead of giving a helping hand, they turn a blind eye.

My mother continued telling me ***"We finally reached Iran, but sadly many people could not make it"***. She said whilst there, they were at the danger of being handed over to the Iraqi regime by the Iranian authorities as part of a dirty deal, so she had to start searching for another place for safety. It was then when she managed to come to England to start a new life, although this took much difficulty.

She has also told me her difficulties of starting a refugee life here in UK saying ***"As a refugee here, I found it very difficult to survive. I had barely any money, and didn't speak any English. I had to study the language whilst claiming asylum. Luckily, we were not turned down by the Home Office and therefore allowed to stay"***

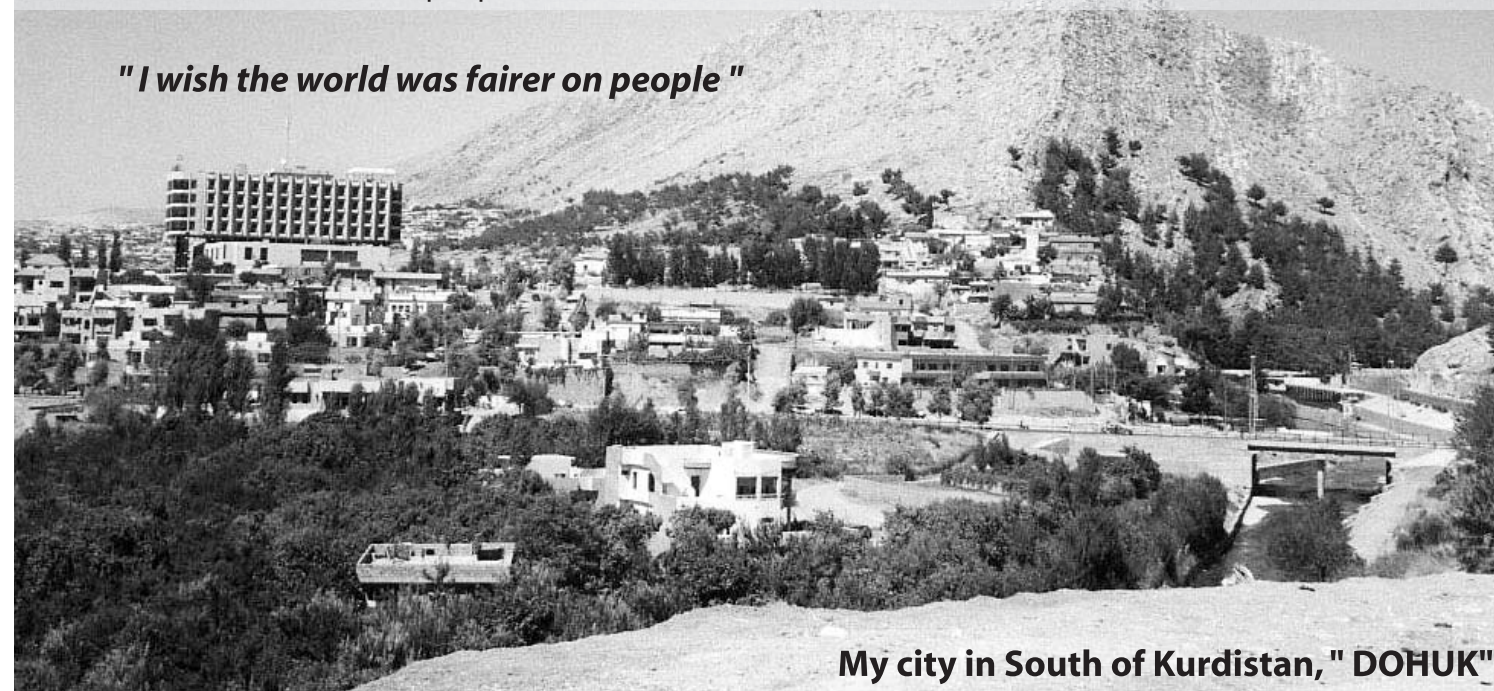
I have to say that I am very glad that my mother, my brother and I were given a second chance in life. I think we deserved it. I have tried to make sense of why we are refugees and what happened to us to leave everything behind and start somewhere else as refugees. I had to get to know our background and what happened to us through the eyes of my mother as I was too little to remember.

I have affection for the refugees who flee their countries because of war, poverty and other reasons to claim asylum in other parts of the world, and get turned down. It is not someone's fault when their country is facing hard times. I do believe it is not fair that doors are closed on people whom their lives are in danger and cannot get to safety. I feel there is a lack of understanding towards what happens to people to become refugees.

I strongly believe that it is a shame to turn a blind eye on people who are suffering. These people deserve a decent life just like others. I am glad we made it and believe we deserved to be given another chance to start in life. I can say this being a victim of war myself and I strongly believe every person is worthy of being helped and certainly deserve being invested in.

I wish the world was fairer on people.

"I wish the world was fairer on people"



My city in South of Kurdistan, "DOHUK"