

**Submission to the UN Human Rights Council “Commission of Inquiry” on Israel  
created May 27, 2021 by resolution A/HRC/RES/S-30/1**

**Organization:** HARIF on behalf of the descendants of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – victims of Arab and Iranian discrimination and repression on the basis of Jewish identity.

**Biography:** HARIF is a UK charity representing Jews from North Africa and the Middle East (UK no.1186454), and dedicated to promoting their history, culture and heritage. Over 2,000 years of history in the Middle East and North Africa came to an abrupt and tragic end just 50 years ago. Jews departed for Israel and the West, leaving an enormous cultural and economic void behind. In another 20 years, few Jews who were born in these countries will still be alive. A vital chapter of Jewish identity, history and culture – an entire civilisation – will be lost. HARIF is here to make sure it is not forgotten.

**Issues to which our submission applies:**

- (1) “Underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict in and between the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem [*sic*], and Israel; as well as systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity;”
- (2) “Facts and circumstances regarding alleged violations of international humanitarian law and alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021;”
- (3) “Identification of those responsible;”

**Submission:** (This submission itself does not constitute an endorsement of the “Commission of Inquiry” or its mandate.)

***Iraqi terror 1967 – 71***

## Remembering the Jewish martyrs of Iraq

1 February 2019

<https://www.jewishrefugees.org.uk/2019/02/remembering-jewish-martyrs-of-iraq.html>

**Fifty years ago, the remaining few thousand Jews in Iraq endured a period of extreme anxiety and terror as nine innocent Jews were hanged in Liberation Square in Baghdad. Scores more disappeared. David Kheder Basson, chairman of the Association of Academics from Iraq in Israel, drew up a list of the victims for the Arabic**

media [Elaph](#) and [Akhbar](#), and posted the articles in English translation on Facebook. Here is an abridged version, combining [Parts 1](#) and [11](#).



*Memorial candles were lit for the nine victims of the Baghdad hangings during a ceremony at Bene Naharayim synagogue, New York on 3 February 2019 (Photo: Rafi.com)*

January 27, is a day with a painful memory for the Jews of Iraq. It is the day when nine Jews were executed fifty years ago. Their bodies were hanged from the gallows in al-Tahrir Square in Baghdad and Um al-Broom in Basra. There was also a 10th victim whose father was Jewish.

In the first five years of the Baath regime (1968-1973), the remnants of the Jews of Iraq, numbering around 3,000 people, were subjected to a vicious campaign of executions, killings, tortures, kidnapping and ad-hoc arrests, aside from discrimination and persecution.

In the autumn of 1968, a frenzied campaign against the Jews of Iraq began. Dozens of Iraqi Jews from all social classes and ages were arrested again. Some of them were accused of spying for Israel and subversion. The government carried out campaign of executions and physical liquidation in prisons. The Jews were helpless in a game whose real aim was to intimidate the Iraqi people and Baath opponents by picking the most vulnerable minority in Iraq, knowing that no one will dare to object or to voice protest.

The arrest campaign began in September 1968 when four Jews were arrested and disappeared without trace. Rumors started circulating that they were in Qasr Alnihaya (the Palace of the End) – a royal palace that was used as an infamous prison and where people were tortured and killed. Weeks later we heard that seventeen Jews from Basra had been arrested and brought to Baghdad on charges of spying for Israel; ten of them were students. The number increased over the next weeks to more than thirty people.

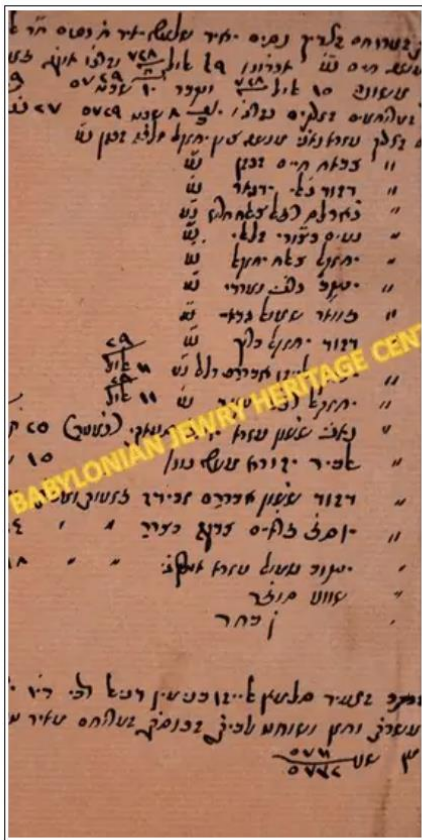


*Show trial in January 1969*

Most of the accused who were tried in January 1969 in a revolutionary court, headed by an army guy called Watwout, were tortured and had to confess that they were spies, except for Naji Zilkha, Charles Horesh, Zaki Zitou and Abdel-Hussain Nur Gita who refused to obey the instructions and insisted on their innocence despite the severe torture they were subjected to, according to the testimony of prisoners who were with them. The court appointed a defense lawyer who was apologetic that he had to defend spies, instead of trying to show that the accusations were false and that confessions were made under torture.

After several hearings of the mock trials and trumped-up charges, 14 people were sentenced to death and were executed by hanging in the central prison in Baghdad on the night of 26 January. The bodies of eleven of the accused were hanged by the gallows in the morning of the 27th in al-Tahrir square in Baghdad and three in Um al-Broom square in Basra.

These are the names of those who have been executed (God bless their souls). Their dead bodies were hanged and each one of them had a plaque with his name, profession and religion:



Handwritten list kept by Salman Dabby, cantor of the Meir Tweg synagogue, of those hanged in January 1969. Now at the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center

**1969**

Nine Jews executed:

- **Ezra Naji Zilkha** (51)  
– a household appliances dealer in Basra, flown from Baghdad to Basra so his body could hang in Um Al-Broom square
- **Na'im Khedhour Hilali** (19) – a Commerce College student from Basra
- **Daoud Heskell Dalal** (16) – a student in Basra, was forced to say that he was nineteen years old so that he could be tried and sentenced to death
- **Hesqal Saleh Hesqel** (17) – A student from Basra, was forced to say that he was over eighteen in order to be hanged

- **Sabah Haim Dayan** (30) – car spare parts dealer from Basra
- **Daoud Ghali Yadgar** (23) – student from Basra
- **Yaqoub Gourji Namerdi** (38) – employee of a transport company from Basra
- **Fouad Gabbay** (30) – employee in the Excise Office in Basra
- **Charles Rafael Horesh** (44) – car dealer and agent from Baghdad.

Hanged on the same day:

- **Jamal Sabih al-Hakim**, a student at the University of Basra who was of Jewish origin (his father had converted to Islam or so we were understood), was executed with this group. His body was hanged in the Um al-Broom square in Basra
- **Abdul Mohsin Jarallah** – a Shiite Muslim merchant,
- **Muhammad Abdul Hussain Nur Gita** – a Shiite Muslim from Pakistan, hanged in Baghdad and his body was taken to Basra to hang in the square of Al-Broum
- **Zaki Andraus Zitou** – a Christian from Basra
- **Albert Habib Thomas** – a Christian from Basra (Sami, the brother of Albert, died from torture)

These are the names of other Iraqi Jews who were murdered:

### **1968-1969**

- **Yaqoub (Jack) Atrakji**, a textile dealer and exporter of dates and real estate owner was arrested on 8 November as a suspect in the espionage network above. He died on the same day as a result of torture to terrorize the other defendants and to force them to confess the charges. The disregard for judicial and moral values reached the lowest level when the Revolutionary Court sentenced him to death by hanging, in absentia, for his escape and not attending court to answer charges. His body was never found. His properties including liquid assets were expropriated
- **Nissim Yair Hakham**, an accountant in a contractor's office. He was arrested at the beginning of September and died a week later as a result of torture. His body was handed over five months later for Jewish burial in the cemetery without allowing the family to attend. Throughout the period in which his body was in the refrigerator, the prison staff continued to receive food and clothing from his family

- **Fouad**

**Yaqoub Shasha** – an iron merchant who was arrested on 21 December with his father and imprisoned in a basement in Qasr Alnihaya and then disappeared. About three weeks later, the official newspaper reported that he had fled. His body was never found.

- **Shimon Maslawi**, newsagent in Baghdad. He was arrested in the Adhamiya district in December 1968 and charged with spying. He died in the same month from torture and was buried in an Islamic cemetery.

After the global wave of disgust at the executions and the public hanging of bodies and celebrations, the government resorted to other methods of execution and murder of Jews during the rest of 1969:

- **Daoud Sasson Zubaida**, a construction contractor who was arrested on 23 July and imprisoned in Qasr Alnihaya, was tortured. The office of the Rabbinate was told three days later to send someone to take his body for burial

- On 25 August, **Yitzhak**

**Eliahu Dallal**, the agent of Toshiba in Baghdad and **Hesqel Rafael Yacoub**, owner of properties from Basra, were hanged in the central prison in Baghdad

- **Naji Sa'ati** was executed in the central prison on 7 November.

- **Akram Ezra Baher** was arrested on 27 September and died in Qasr Alnihaya from torture. His body was not found.

### 1970 – 1971

Three Jews were killed:

- **Shoua Soufair**, a trademark registrar, was taken to Qasr Alnihaya and died from torture. His body was not found; his wife had been looking for him for months and was told that he had escaped.

- **Albert Yehuda**

**Nounou**, a wealthy man from Baghdad, was imprisoned in September 1968 and was executed in the central prison with others in the Baath bloodbath on 21 and 22 January 1970

- **Ezra Yaqoub Jouri** was arrested in January 1970 and imprisoned in Qasr Alnihaya. After severe torture, he was released in January 1971. A week after his release, his body was found near Baghdad airport with gunshots and bound hands and feet.

### 1972

Even after the departure of most Jews from Iraq and with only a few hundred left, 10 Jews were abducted or arrested in the autumn of 1972, leaving no trace behind.

In September

- **Yaqoub Abdel Aziz**, lawyer. He was kidnapped just before Yom Kippur
- **Yaqoub Yamen Rejwan**, a merchant arrested from his home
- **Shaul Yamen Rejwan**, owner of a liquor store – was arrested from his home in October
- **Dr. Ezra Khazam**, a doctor who went out to visit friends and was kidnapped in the street and forced to ride in a car while passers-by looked on
- **Hesqel Victor Abu Dawood**, a cloth merchant from Basra, was arrested from his home
- **Shaul Barukh Shamash**, owner of real estate properties, arrested from his home
- **Menashe Shamash**, 77, the father of eight children, was kidnapped on his way to the cafe to invite his friends to attend a wedding ceremony.
- **Salim Sadqa**, accounts holder
- **Ezra Shamtoub**

In November

- **Naji Chetayat**

### 1973

When only a few Jews remained in Iraq, 15 were killed – 9 of them were arrested and disappeared without trace, their properties were looted, and 6 were killed in their homes (5 from one family – Qashqoush):

No further trace after their arrest

- **Naji Ezra Qashqoush** – Car Dealer and his young wife Suad Qashqoush. The two were arrested on 6 February
- **Ezra Menashe Qahtan** – a tailor and his brother Salim Menashe Qahtan were arrested on 20 March
- **Naim Salim Fattal**, a hardware vendor arrested on 29 March

• **Shoua Aziz Al-Baqal**, a carpenter arrested on 4 April

• **Yehuda Khadhouri al-Sayegh**, and his sisters **Rahma** and **Eliza** were arrested on April and their home was looted

Killed at home

• **Abraham Nassim al-Sayegh** was killed on 10 October in his house and his home was looted

• The **Qashqoush** family massacre of five members on 12 April – Father Ruben Ezra, mother Clementine, sons Samir, Fuad and daughter Joyce, were slaughtered in their house and their bodies were cut and carried in suitcase. No one knows if they were buried or not

### 1975

• **Ruben Balboul** was killed in Baghdad in mysterious circumstances

• **Moshe Hakham Eliahu**, a pharmacist suffered a heart attack which led to his death in hospital on the same day he was released after several months of torture

### 1992

• **Esterina Bakhash-Abed** was killed at home and her flat was looted

1998

• **Zion Hakkak** and **Moshe Shlomo Ephraim** were shot dead when a Palestinian entered the Administrative office of the Jewish community in Baghdad

### 2005

• And finally, after the fall of Saddam a young man **Yaqoub Shahrhani** was kidnapped and disappeared without trace.

\*When will Iraq Apologise ? ([See penultimate letter by Lyn Julius, Jewish Chronicle, 1 Feb](#))