

## **THE WAVE OF INSANITY**

Respected President and Guests,

It is a privilege to participate in this event, and to be here amongst you today.

I would like to start by saying, how fortunate I am to be alive, and how exceptionally wonderful, to have the courage, and the ability to stand here before you. Talking about my agonising, torched, and tormented experience... As this, would have been impossible not so long ago.

Life is immense, full of hopes and dreams, to be fulfilled by us all... Yet unfortunately, some of us choose to indulge in the dark and mysterious side of human nature... Consumed by hatred, malice and sinister acts against societies... The strong bondage with evil and the ideology of rampage brings up a formidable impact and disarray to human lives... The lack of compassion and disregard to justice, results in so much suffering and turmoil.... Thus triggers intense, psychological and behavioural complications, which lead to a disorientation and destruction to the very core of human state of mind...

I somehow, consider myself lucky... I have survived deadly acts of torture... In fact, I escaped certain death... But unfortunately; or should

I say; although I survived death; I was left with a deep scar, from the physical and mental torture, during my captivity as a hostage in IRAQ, in 2005 while I was on trip from IRELAND, visiting my family...

I was kidnapped from my father's home. In front of my family, hopelessly and humiliated, I was forced to be handcuffed and threatened to be killed there and then, if I do not obey... There were many of them and well armed... Therefore, I had no choice but to surrender to reality. Any confrontation was out of the question... I was then, dragged out, and I could hear my father begging them to release me, saying to them, to take him instead of me... That almost killed me hearing him saying that... You see; my father is 74 years old, in a wheel chair, and has been since 1972, due to the torture at that time... So called then, legal governmental questioning... Thousands at that time, have lost their lives, or became invalids, due to the governmental torture... Yet silently, the world, especially the US, and the UK, ignored the issues. So much for human rights!!!!

2005, however, it was my turn, only this time by; **A WELL KNOWN ORGANIZED AND FEARLESS GROUP...** I was taken to my unknown fate in front of my family, telling them that if they wanted me back alive they would have to pay a ransom... Imagine the impact of it all

and the horrifying psychological trauma my family had to endure... Not to mention, the pain and agony, for not knowing what is the outcome of this nightmare... **“No answers, no alternatives”**... With a gun against my head, I was taken out and shoved in the boot of one of their cars... Blindfolded, I was driven to an unknown destination, where I was held... I was not alone; there were others before me...

I somehow, could sense that death was amongst us, and death was imminent; for those whose ransom could not be paid and for those whose nationalities are most hated! Such as US and UK citizens, even of an Iraqi origin...

During my captivity with others, we were subjected to horrifying techniques of torture. Beaten up harshly with heavy cables, endured electric shocks, scorched by hot water and kicked until we lose consciousness.... Thinking we are dying, but we come round later, with excruciating pain and fear... Praying not to go through it again, but again it remains, like a daily ritual... At times, I used to wish and hope to die, to get away from it all... to get away from the manipulation and pain... From the control and total obedience to the executioner!!! Who became the giver and taker, of life itself!!! To get away from the witnessing of death and the foul smell of fear... From the daily mock execution which

they thrive on; that was their most ideological foundation, which gives them power and absolute control... Yet, breaks you to pieces and eventually, you are under total submission, to whatever they wanted you to do!!! Total brainwash...

During conversations with my family on the phone, while demanding my ransom, they often insist on paying quickly, or else they would receive my head in a bag. In addition, they used to make sure that my family hears my voice, on the phone screaming, with merciful roar, filled with pain and hate... I felt so sorry for my family, and for what they were going through... The uncertainty and loss, which adds to more suffering for them...

Anxiety and emotions are running high. Disillusioned, and distant from the world, scared and always wondering, whether I live to the next day... It was like being consumed, by the ever-growing lava of death...

At times, they held me down aggressively, put the sharp edged knife against my throat and make me say my last words... As I did, at that moment, I lose all capabilities and I just surrender... I surrender to death; then I hear one say; **“give him another chance, give him one more day; maybe his family will pay the ransom soon”** that was a relief for me...

Huge acts of violence and cruelty have been committed against us, by those who have colluded with the devil, and it has been reflected in the debilitating and devastating consequences, through our conscious and unconscious state of mind...

We strived to survive and to stay alive... if not for us but then for those we have left behind... Those who love us and waiting anxiously for our return... My wish was to live for those, whose love and memories have kept me strong. To those, I often dreamed of, to escape the loneliness and madness... I wanted to live for those worth living for, my loved ones, to hold and hold endlessly and never to let go... **My heart was there with them, and I often prayed, “Dear GOD, do not deny me the chance to see them again. I do not want to die like this, like the others here and just vanish in the midst of dust without trace... That was not the end I was hoping for, nor I am asking for immortality, but GOD; to die is to be buried in dignity”...**

I could never forget the incident of the 67 years old man, who died because he could not bear the pain any longer. He was screaming with agony while being tortured. You see he was 67 years old, far too old for whatever was going on around there.... He could not go on any longer. They were actually beating him, and electrocuting him to death. Still

screaming and shouting, he was begging and begging for mercy. Again and again to stop, but they never did... Suddenly and quietly, he began to talk, as if he was no longer feeling any pain.... Yet, they were still torturing him... Then, in a surprising and cheerful voice, he said, **“oh my brother, it is so good to see you, have you come for me?** Calmly he carried on; **“I am so happy to see you, you came to take me with you.”**... I could sense that those were his last words... Then, peacefully he took his last breath and stopped... then I could hear the air of a dying man comes out slowly, but surely, I thought, with his soul... I was lying next to him at that time, feeling his pain, hearing him asking me for help and shelter, but sadly, I had no choice, I could do nothing to stop it. I was powerless, speechless and blindfolded... Crying in silence and shivering with fear, as to what might happen next? Or, am I to follow?

**(“I have died several times, and every day, but I kept on breathing”)**

After a period of time, and still hanging on, by the thread of life and death. **Finally**, and to my relief, my ransom was paid. It was in the morning when I got the news in front of other hostages... As I am about to be released and saying good-bye to the others, we embraced and cried. However, I felt a sense of confusion and mixed feelings, that of happiness for my freedom and extremely sad for leaving them behind... I was unable to control my guilt of surviving alone; not ever knowing what is to

become of them. What fate lies ahead of them? Who lives and dies? Would they ever cope until that day? The day to be free and reunited with their families, as I would be... I hoped and wished it a million times....

I could not forget what we have shared in vain. We shared ghastly moments, sleepless haunted cold nights, we shed tears together and most of all, we encouraged each other not to ever give up and to be strong until we are free again.

At last, I am out, my hands are free, the blindfold is off, and I could see the blue sky and the soft clouds above... **“I am alive”**... I am going back to those, whom my heart had been yearning for, my loved ones. I’m once more reunited with my family, which were the greatest feelings for any one to have. It was a sheer blessing to see their faces, and to hold their hands again. It is an overwhelming feeling of happiness, no matter how I express it; it was just an indescribable moment of joy and disbelief...

A little later, I came back to Ireland leaving the bad memories behind. I just wanted to get on with my life and work, just as normal just as any one can be. A year had passed and everything was OK for me, but then gradually events started to change. I began to think about the past and the way I was hurt. I was thinking about the others, deeply confused and irritated. The scenes of death and blood never leave my sight: the ever-

haunting flash backs and nightmares... I thought I was disintegrating into ashes... I lost faith in people and every thing else. I was in a world of my own, unable to concentrate, far a way and distant from reality and rationality... The ever-growing feelings of anger, and an uncontrollable rage building inside of me... I was seeking revenge hoping to ease and make the pain go away... I was struggling with my demons, demons of darkness, that possessed my mind and soul, and dragging me down slowly to hell...

I was easily irritated by noise, and not able to sleep properly... The decline in my ability to focus and the fear of the uncertainty, as what might, or what is going to happen to me... I felt life was empty, nothing but dark perceptions! I cursed the people who did this to me, and for what they made me go through... I cursed the devil the world and whatever existed... I gave up hope, wanting to end this interminable life... I wanted to put a stop to the antagonism and wickedness of my dark and painful world... I thought, “what options do I have in this meaningless, joyless and vile life?”... Why go on in this cruel world? – full of envy and viciousness...

I was contaminated by fear, hate, and rage, socially and emotionally disconnected... I had nothing to look forward to; I felt I was in a confined

space, which closes on me every single moment, in every breath I take and crushing me slowly like an empty shell... **I have been to death and back...** I struggled hard and long to get away from it all... To get away from the gates of hell, and to come back to myself once again, to remain in the present and to try to forget about the painful past...

I am now accepting the concept of life and happiness, and the various ways to recognise falseness from truth, right from wrong and most importantly, never ever to dwell on the past; nostalgically maybe, but always look to the future with positive thinking...

I now began to understand and to be aware of the positive transformation and development within myself. In addition, I have the ability to reflect on my bad experience without being highly antagonised. This was achieved only by much determination, dedication, and the on-going process of rehabilitation. Together with progressive programmes and evaluation by the health care specialists at the centre at SPIRASI: with absolute patience and persistence, along with their noble and social ethics.

I would sincerely like to emphasise that the services, which SPIRASI provides, are much needed now a days, as we all aware, that the issue of the refugees is on the increase.

I strongly believe that the centre SPIRASI should have more recognition for the free services they provide. In addition, more financial support from the government and other organisations is vital, to carry on the work and to establish a stronger advocacy and care for those most affected.

Your hard work and dedications are greatly appreciated, as it makes a difference to people's lives for the better.

I would like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, the whole team at the centre SPIRASI without exceptions: especially Dr Shang, for his excellent physical healing methods, which helped me immensely, and to admit my sincere and **unequivocal** gratitude to Margaret O'Reilly for her therapeutic ways and understanding, which made me achieve so much. "Thank You; you have giving me the confidence to believe in myself again".

I hope that now, I will continue to go forward and take my experience to enhance and participate in the advocacy and awareness, for the survivors of torture. Sadly but unfortunately true, how little attention some of us

give this issue and how little we truly understand about the anguish that is embodied deep in the mind of the **TRAUMATISED VICTIMS**.

I must say, it has been hard and long journey for me. However, I should state the fact, that I am happy ... **I am after all, standing on my own two feet**. I would like to thank you all very much for giving this opportunity.

GOD Bless you all.