

What Is Anfal?

The word al-Anfal is religious in origin: it is the name of the eighth sura or chapter of the Koran, and literally means 'the spoils', as in 'the spoils of battle'.

As President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein frequently cloaked the secularist actions of his Ba'athist regime with religious language. This is why the name 'Anfal' was chosen by the Iraqis to describe their military campaign of mass extermination against rural Kurdistan in the closing stages of the Iran-Iraq war.

The documentary film **Kulajo: My Heart Is Darkened** explores the stories of survivors of this horrific event using first-hand accounts, narration and archive footage which illuminates the causes and long-term effects of the Kurdish Genocide on villagers in Iraqi Kurdistan.

This Teacher Pack serves as a companion guide for the documentary. Each unit focuses on fostering an in-depth understanding of a specific aspect of Anfal.

The four units in this Teacher Pack are not intended to be taught in their entirety. Instead, they serve as a resource from which educators can select learning objectives, follow-up questions, and activities that will best meet the needs of their students. **The information is designed for students aged 13 and up.**

What Is Anfal?

‘No one heard our cries’

– Osman Ali Aziz, Kulajo

Focus of Lesson:

- Introduction to the Kurds of northern Iraq
- Introduction to Anfal and the surrounding conflicts

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the basic causes of Anfal
 - To identify the key players in the conflict, including the Iraqi army, jash (Kurdish militia working for the Iraqi Government), peshmerga and Kurdish villagers
 - To learn about Anfal through the personal testimony of those who experienced it
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Lesson:

Tell the students that they are about to watch a documentary about Anfal. Explain that Anfal was a genocidal campaign waged against rural Kurds by the Iraqi army during the Iran-Iraq war in 1988. Also explain that mass slaughter of Kurdish civilians had occurred years before but this time the killings were given a religious justification.

Discuss the fact that during Anfal, up to 182, 000 Kurds were killed and that chemical weapons were used against a vulnerable civilian population, the first time that a state deployed poison gas against its own people.

Tell the students that they are about to hear the personal accounts of some of the survivors of Anfal. Play the documentary film **Kulajo – My Heart Is Darkened**. Ask questions about the content of the documentary to check for understanding.

Follow-up Questions:

- ♦ What does it mean to be 'Anfaled'?
- ♦ Who are "the jash" and what role did play in the conflict between the Kurds and the Iraqis?
- ♦ What were the relative strengths and resources of the Iraqi army and the peshmerga?
- ♦ What types of weapons were used by the Iraqi army on the villages that harboured the peshmerga?

Activity:

Discuss and debate whether Anfal was different to traditional warfare. If so, how? Are distinctions like this important to make? For whom?





Unit 2

Life Before Anfal

‘Our life used to be better back then because we had our relatives close to us. Aunts and cousins, we were all together’

– Fatima Khurshid

Focus of Lesson:

- ♦ Understanding who the Kurds are

Learning Objectives:

- ♦ To develop a deeper understanding of the Kurds, including where and how they lived before Anfal
 - ♦ To explore the role of family in Kurdish culture and lifestyle
 - ♦ To understand the immediate effects of Anfal on the villagers and families of Kulajo
 - ♦ To extract information from filmed interviews and archive footage and draw conclusions about the events witnessed
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Lesson:

After viewing the documentary **Kulajo: My Heart is Darkened**, use follow-up questions and directed activities to assess what students have learned about the Kurdish villagers of Kulajo. Encourage students to consider how tragic events can affect close-knit communities.

Follow-up Questions:

- ♦ How did the Kurds of Kulajo make a living?
- ♦ How big was the village of Kulajo and who lived there?
- ♦ Under what conditions were the Kurds living before Anfal?
- ♦ What restrictions did the government of Saddam Hussein place on the Kurdish culture and way of life before Anfal?
- ♦ Where did the people of Kulajo go when their village was destroyed?

Activities:

- ♦ Have students research the Kurds, focusing on their culture, religious practises, and lifestyle.
- ♦ Ask students to consider how they define and experience their relationships to other people. Tell them to consider geographical, ancestral, economic, political and familial factors. Ask them how they decide if someone is a "friend" or an "enemy". Discuss and debate the factors that determine conflict among groups of people and individuals.
- ♦ Have students create a family tree with as many family members as they can think of. Have students imagine what it would be like to live in a village comprised entirely of their family members and relatives. Have students consider what it would be like to lose half of their family members in a short span of time. How would an event like Anfal impact their lives?



Unit 3

How was Anfal Planned?

**'I'll kill them all with chemical weapons. Who's going to say anything?
F*** the international community and those who listen to them'**

– Ali Hassan al-Majid ('Chemical Ali')

Focus of Lesson:

- ♦ Understanding how Anfal was planned and executed
- ♦ Understanding the role of chemical weapons and concentration camps in Anfal
- ♦ Understanding the historical context of the conflict

Learning Objectives:

- ♦ To identify and understand the difference between warfare and genocide
- ♦ To understand the long and short-term effects of chemical weapons on civilian populations
- ♦ To understand the purpose of Anfal
- ♦ To understand the recent history of the Kurdish region in the Middle East

Lesson:

Before beginning the lesson, turn to the last page of this education pack to find the handout titled **'The Human Cost of Anfal'**. Prepare copies for students to read independently or in groups. Hand out the information sheet after playing the documentary.

Follow-up Questions:

- ♦ How many of the villagers in Kulajo were killed?
- ♦ How many Kurdish people were killed or imprisoned during Anfal?
- ♦ Who was 'Chemical Ali'? How did he earn his nickname?
- ♦ Why did 'Chemical Ali' declare areas of northern Iraq to be 'prohibited zones'?
- ♦ Did Saddam Hussein want to 'erase the Kurdish culture' as alleged by the survivors of Anfal? Did he succeed?
- ♦ What punishments did Saddam Hussein and Ali Hassan al-Majid receive for their roles in the Anfal genocide? When did this happen? Was justice done?

Activities:

- ♦ Have students look up the legal definition of genocide and determine in groups whether it covers Anfal.
- ♦ Discuss and debate the moral implications of killing a large percentage of a specific race of people.
- ♦ Have students read the handout titled '**The Human Cost of Anfal**', explaining the historical context of the Kurdish region of the Middle East. Discuss the religious and political reasons for conflict between the Shia, Sunni, and Kurds. Discuss, and debate the role of the West in the conflict in the Middle East.





Unit 4

The Long-Term Effects of Anfal

‘Where is our beauty? Our suffering and sorrow have destroyed us’

– Ismet Mohammad Mahmoud

Focus of Lesson:

- Thinking about the long-term effects of genocide on groups of people
- Thinking about the long-term effects of genocide on individuals

Learning Objectives:

- To explore the options that oppressed populations with limited resources have when threatened with genocide
- To understand that traumatic events can have far-reaching effects on those who experienced them
- To understand that traumatic events can have far-reaching effects on entire cultures

Lesson:


This lesson encourages students to draw their own conclusions about Anfal based on the information presented in the documentary.

After viewing **Kulajo – My Heart Is Darkened**, use the follow-up questions and directed activities below to assess what students understand about the long-term effects of Anfal on the people of Kulajo, and the Kurdish culture as a whole.

Follow-up Questions:

- ♦ What kinds of belongings did the people of Kulajo bring with them when their villages were razed? What happened to these belongings? Why?
- ♦ What was the Topzawa transit camp? How were the prisoners divided? Who was taken?
- ♦ Who was killed after being taken from the camp?
- ♦ What happened to the women, children, and elderly Kurds living in the Iraqi concentration camps? Under what conditions were they living? What was done to them?
- ♦ Where do the Kurdish people live today?

Activities:

- ♦ Discuss the potential long-term effects of Anfal on the Kurdish culture. What has been lost? What has been retained? How have their lives changed since Anfal?
 - ♦ Discuss the potential long-term effects of killing off an entire generation of fighting-aged men. How might this impact the Kurdish community?
 - ♦ Tell the students to think about the story of Teimour Abdullah Ahmad, the lone survivor of the mass shooting described in the film. What were the immediate effects of his experience? What long-term effects has he experienced? Ask the students to consider the fact that Teimour was able to testify against the people who implemented Anfal, and that some of those individuals were later executed for their crimes. How far does justice go in healing the wounds of genocide?
 - ♦ Ask the students to think about the family who took in Teimour after he escaped the mass execution. Discuss what the family was risking when they chose to help save his life rather than report him to the authorities. Ask the students what they would do if they were faced with a similar choice. Discuss the impact that individuals can have when confronted with genocidal events.
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The Human Cost of Anfal

'Anfal' was Saddam Hussein's genocidal campaign against the Kurdish population of Iraq.

The international legal definition of genocide, as endorsed by the United Nations, is 'an intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group'.

HOW DID PEOPLE DIE?

Chemical weapons

Poisoning

Conventional weapons

Mass execution pits

Firing squads

Exposure/Maltreatment in Prison

Torture



1.5 million
KURDS DISPLACED
FROM HOMES IN IRAQI
KURDISTAN BY 1991

Source of figures:
Kurdistan Regional Government

70% OF VICTIMS
WERE MEN BETWEEN
15 - 50 YEARS

- ♦ By the conclusion of Anfal on 6 September 1988 more than 4,000 villages had been destroyed in Iraqi Kurdistan.
- ♦ Anfal's cost in human lives is estimated at being anywhere between 100,000 and 182,000 people.
- ♦ Approximately 250 Iraqi Kurdish villages were estimated to have suffered chemical weapons attacks in Anfal.
- ♦ 140,000 people are estimated to have fled Iraqi Kurdistan in 1988 to Iran (approximately 100,000), Turkey (27,000), Greece (5,000), Pakistan (1,500), Syria (numbers unconfirmed) and European countries (numbers unconfirmed).
- ♦ During Anfal, 90% of Kurdish villages were destroyed by the Iraqi army according to the Kurdish Regional Government.



Key Dates

- ♦ **First Anfal:** Jafati valley, 23 February to 19 March 1988
- ♦ **Second Anfal:** Qaradagh, 22 March to 1 April 1988
- ♦ **Third Anfal:** Garmiyan, 7 to 20 April 1988
- ♦ **Fourth Anfal:** Lesser Zab valley, 3 to 8 May 1988
- ♦ **Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Anfals:** Rawanduz and Shaqlawa valleys, 15 May to 28 August 1988
- ♦ **End of Iran–Iraq War:** Ayatollah Khomeini's Iranian regime accepts ceasefire on 20 August, 1988
- ♦ **Final Anfal:** Bahdinan, 25 August to 6 September 1988

