

Kuwaiti sportsmen, facilities stood brave & bold against Iraqi invasion

Sports clubs transformed into places of horror

By Zahra Al-Kadhemi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait marks on Monday the 31st anniversary of the Iraqi invasion, which had affected all aspects of life including the sports scene and community in the country.

While Iraqis brutally occupied Kuwait on August 2nd, 1990, sports facilities were turned into location for torture, death and imprisonment.

Despite the invasion, Kuwaiti sportsmen and facilities stood brave and bold against the unlawful occupiers, reminding the Iraqis that they could not erase Kuwait and its people from history.

In their futile attempt to subdue the Kuwaiti spirit, the Iraqi forces targeted Kazma Sporting Club, turning it to the largest holding cell.

Facilities belonging to other clubs such as Al-Arabi, Qadsia, and others also met the same fate.

Prior to the invasion, the Kuwaiti sports community was looking ahead for the upcoming sport season as many of the teams were in training camps abroad and

the national squads of various sports disciplines were gearing up for the 11th Asian Games in China in October of 1990.

The Kuwaiti football team in March won the 10th Gulf Football Cup and was preparing for the Asian Games in a training camp in France; however, the team was shocked of the invasion with many members opting to return to the country via land from Saudi Arabia.

Another blow for the Kuwaiti sports scene came with the assassination of Kuwait Football Association's (KFA) President Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who fought back against the Iraqi invaders.

Also the killing of Qushayan Al-Mutairi, a military officer who was scheduled to train in Berlin on August 4th with the National Basketball Team for the Asian Cup, was considered as another example of Iraqis trying to break Kuwaiti sportsmen.

Al-Mutairi bravely joined his military comrades, clashed with the Iraqi forces and was killed in the process.

Following the examples of Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad and Al-Mutairi, Kuwaiti sportsmen began to retaliate with whatever they could to save Kuwait's athletic legacy.

Decision

Speaking to KUNA on the matter, Sulaiman Al-Adsani, who was Deputy President of Kazma Sporting Club when Iraqis invaded Kuwait, said that he took the decision to preserve the club's files and records, when he received a call from Yousef Al-Shaheen, the club's President.

Al-Shaheen directed him to collect files to be brought to his home for safe keeping before the Iraqi army reach the cities, said Al-Adsani.

He continued that the Iraqi troops tried to impose the grim reality by turning Kazma's squash court and swimming pool into torture chambers.

Several athletes were taken in for questioning; including volleyball's Fawzi Al-Matouq, Jamal Al-Jazzaf, indicated Al-Adsani, revealing that there were sportsmen executed like basketball stars Qushayan Al-Mutairi, Ahmad Qabazard, Faysal Al-Sanea, Khaled Al-Eid, and Abdulaziz Al-Misfer.

Relating his story, one of Kuwait's golden era athletes, Captain Mohammad Ibrahim was with the national football team in France as they prepared for the coming Asian Games.

He said that on the "fourth day of our training camp, the devastating news hit the players and everything was put on halt with the team heading to Saudi Arabia to enter Kuwait.

"We entered through the Saudi border by desert until we reached Kuwait and found Iraqi forces and tanks scattered all over the desert," Ibrahim added.

Ibrahim stood witness to the destruction and looting that flooded the country and also successfully avoided the Iraqis attempt to draft him and other players in the so-called the "Province 19" football team.

He said he and other athletes figured out ways to avoid drafting by changing their home addresses and identifications.

Ibrahim did not stand still and upon his return he solely devoted himself to serve whatever his nation's people were in need of until liberation is achieved.

Similarly, Al-Arabi's football star Malek Al-Qallaf, who was a military officer, also recounted the horrors of the invasion.

Encounter

He spoke of his encounter with the Iraqi forces, "Moayad Al-Haddad, Khaled Al-Shimmiri, and Abdulaziz Al-Ambery, I was playing football near my home Bayan area and suddenly we scattered in different directions fearing for our lives as we realize that the Iraqis were hunting down players."

Al-Qallaf remembered how Kuwaitis used to be so fond of their sports stadiums and facilities and to witness them being used for such heinous acts were overwhelming.

Heroic acts were not carried out only by Kuwaitis, said Al-Qallaf who recounted the story of a Pakistani worker at the Al-Arabi club named Muneer.

"Muneer managed to hide some of the clubs greatest trophies and shields before the Iraqi forces managed to get their hands on them," Al-Qallaf affirmed.

Meanwhile, the complete destruction of Al-Yarmouk SC's facilities was vast as recalled by Assistant Manager of the club Husain Yaseen.

Yarmouk club had missile launchers and aircraft were positioned there, said Yaseen.

In December 1990, Yaseen was apprehended and taken by the forces to Salwa Police Station then to Bayan Station along with 70 others.

They took him to the main Kuwait Prison building with 3,000 captives before being transported to Basra in Boskhair captivity where there were around 2,000 POWs.

Thankfully, Yaseen was freed in February 1991 along with a large number of POWs due to the International Red Cross' efforts following the Liberation.



The Kazma Club building which the occupiers turned into a detention center.



Sports stadiums were not spared from the sabotage and brutality of the invading Iraqi forces.



Destruction of the Kuwait Club buses.

KUNA photos



Kuwait Martyrs Office

KUNA photo

Bravery ... heroism

Martyrs Office a 'welfare entity', supports over 14,000 individuals

By Mervat Abduldayerem

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): The Kuwait Martyrs Office is an exceptional regional and international bureau supporting, for life, the welfare of over 14,000 individuals.

The office was originally established in June 1991 for the families of people martyred during the Iraqi invasion, which began on August 2, 1990 with Kuwaitis and 15 other nationalities benefiting from its services.

In a KUNA interview, Acting Director-General of the office Salah Al-Awfan said on Monday that the Iraqi invasion, though causing many misfortunes and regional schisms, had also resulted in instances of bravery and heroism in which Kuwaitis and fellow residents laid their lives in protection of the land they loved dearly.

The office -- founded 30 years ago by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- was first dedicated to those martyred in the Iraqi invasion; however, now it includes all those laying their lives for Kuwait since independence in 1961.

In the era of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amiri decree 325/2011 was signed making the office fall under the jurisdiction of the minister of Amiri diwan affairs.

The board of trustees, which shapes the policies and strategies of the office, includes 10 members: A director general, four members of the defense and security establishments, a member from the Public Authority for Minors Affairs, a member from the Ministry of Social Affairs, and three members of martyrs' relatives or people chosen by the director.

In regards to the categories of those considered as martyrs, Al-Awfan indicated that it includes those sacrificing their lives during military campaigns for Kuwait, individuals dying during the line of



Salah Al-Awfan, Acting Director General

duty, and deaths occurring during natural disasters or terror attacks such as the victims of the Al-Sadeq Mosque bombing in 2015.

Al-Awfan revealed that the current number of martyrs registered by the office was at 1,301 people, including 1,056 Kuwaitis and 245 other residents.

The official added that the martyrs' office had cooperated with other state entities to provide services for the family members and children of the martyrs in recognition of their sacrifice to Kuwait.

Remembering Kuwait's martyrs is of highest importance for their family members as well as their country; therefore, their names and portraits could be seen in schools throughout Kuwait in addition to public streets, buildings belonging to state entities and diplomatic missions abroad, affirmed Al-Awfan who indicated that several protocols were signed in this regard.

On the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the office's operations, Al-Awfan pointed out that restriction imposed to counter the virus spread did not deter the office from its duties, indicating that the office had continued to provide services online via its website without disruption.

Al-Awfan took the chance to thank the Kuwaiti leadership for its 30 years of supporting the work of the office and also expressed gratitude to the board of trustees and employees of the Kuwait Martyrs office.

ABK Congratulates 'Experience the Change' Campaign Winners



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the 4 winners of the fifth salary transfer campaign "Experience the Change", for Al Raed, Prestige and Elite Salary account holders. The draw took place on 27th July, 2021, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The winners were:

- AWADH KHAZAL AWADH ALTURQI
- MESHAL MOHAMMAD ISMAEL ALSAGHEER
- NASHIR MIA WASEL MIA
- NOUSHAD EDAVANA KUNI

The 6th draw will be held on 17th August 2021. Every month 4 winners can win back their salary (2 Kuwaitis

& 2 Expatriates). To be eligible to enter the draw, customers need to have one salary credited into their account in the month prior to the draw date.

Furthermore, upon opening a salary account with ABK, customers can choose one of the following rewards:

- Up to KD1,000 cash gift for Kuwaitis
- Up to KD10,000 interest free loan for Kuwaitis
- Up to KD5,000 interest free loan for Expatriates

The offer is open to new salary clients only, with one salary credited into their account a month prior to the draw date:

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