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## **AFTER THE WAR: HOSTILITIES; The Murders of Baathists**

By AMY WALDMAN

There is de-Baathification by firing, and de-Baathification by death.

On May 18, as Ahmad al-Jaf, a Baath Party member, walked home from his shoe repair shop, a Volkswagen Passat drove by and someone inside it shot him. On May 25, as Ali Talib al-Jabouri, a security agent, drove up to his new home, men in a pickup truck shot him nine times, spurning the car keys he offered in a plea for his life. On June 4, Nazeedah Abdullah Salom, an art teacher and party member, was fatally shot three times from a passing car as she prepared to cross the street to her school.

No one knows exactly how many former Baath Party members and security agents have been killed since Saddam Hussein's government fell, but it is clear that many have died, often at the hands of drive-by hit squads. Most of their deaths have not been reported. "Whom should we inform?" said Adib al-Jaf, whose father was killed. "There is no authority."

Some say the murders reflect the lack of any mechanism to hold the guilty from the Baath era accountable.

At the home of Mr. Jabouri's family, his mother and sisters wept. He was 36, an officer in the security forces for 10 years. He worked at the Education Ministry where, employees said, he regularly informed on them, damaging lives with abandon.

His mother sees it differently. "He didn't hurt anybody," she said.

Parroting the adults around her, his 9-year-old daughter, Shadan, accused the Badr Brigade, an Iranian-trained Shiite militia, of his killing. "They don't kill the big wheels," she said. "They kill the small fish."

The mourning was quieter at Mr. Jaf's home. His son said his father, who was 56, had joined the party to protect his family. They were Kurds living in Saddam City, the predominantly Shiite district of Baghdad. After the Persian Gulf war in 1991, Baathists wanted to know if they were with or against them. They joined.

One rumor has it that Mr. Jaf wrote reports that led to the executions or imprisonment of dozens of people. Nearby shopkeepers disagreed, saying the neighborhood mourned his death. His son said it was impossible that his father wrote reports, because he was illiterate.

Mr. Jaf had been a volunteer guard at a Baath center, his son said, but in 2000 he had asked to be relieved because of poor health. You would abandon the revolution now? a Baath official asked.

Afraid, Mr. Jaf carried on. Three years later, being a soldier, however unenthusiastic, in that revolution cost him his life.

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