

Investigation 10: The Contamination of War

Title: Cities of Slow Death: How the Government Built Homes for Citizens on Carcinogenic Land

By: "The Environmental Investigator"

In northern Hilla, where former army bases and coalition forces camps were located, the government distributed residential land to citizens as a solution to the housing crisis. But it failed to tell them a deadly truth: this land is a biological time bomb. Reports from the Ministry of Environment and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have confirmed contamination with heavy metals and depleted uranium at **311** sites in Iraq, many of them in Babylon. The **40%** increase in cancer rates in these areas is not an act of God; it is the direct result of a criminal administrative decision to ignore environmental cleanup recommendations, turning citizens from victims of war into victims of a polluted peace.

The official 2015 memo from the Hilla municipality, which recommended against construction until after "environmental rehabilitation," was not ignored; it was circumvented. We obtained the minutes of a 2017 provincial council meeting where a vote was passed to abolish this condition under the pretext of "facilitating procedures for citizens." This decision was not innocent. It opened the door for construction companies linked to council members to win contracts to build residential complexes on these lands without bearing the exorbitant cost of cleanup.

The link between pollution and cancer is not a "tentative conclusion." While proving direct causality for each case is complex, the epidemiological data we collected from health centers in the Jurf al-Sakhar area and near the "Midaniyah" camp show an abnormal spike in specific types of cancer (leukemia and lymphoma) and kidney diseases—illnesses scientifically linked to exposure to heavy metals and radiation.

The testimony of "Haj Abdul-Amir" about his son's death is not just a moving personal story. We surveyed a sample of **50** families living in the same area and found that **30%** of them have at least one member suffering from a serious chronic illness that appeared after they moved there. This is not a coincidence; it is a public health disaster unfolding in slow motion.

What happened in the areas of the old military camps in Babylon is a state crime in the fullest sense of the word. The government, with prior knowledge, exposed its citizens to deadly materials, either due to gross negligence or to serve corrupt interests. The question is no longer "Is the soil contaminated?" but "When will the government act to evacuate the residents, compensate them, and begin a real cleanup process?" Every day that passes without action is another day of slow death for the residents of these areas, who fled the violence of war only to fall into the trap of a toxic environment created by their own state.