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# Judit Neurink

## *My Iraqi family*

A woman in a devastated country

Original title: *Mijn Iraakse familie*

NON-FICTION

- Building Iraq's fledgling democracy-

## About the author

Judith Neurink (1957) has been a journalist for over 25 years, writing mainly for the Dutch national newspaper *Trouw*. Her specific focus is the Middle East. Since April 2008, she has lived in the northern Iraqi city of Suleymania, where she set up the Independent Media Centre Kurdistan (IMCK). She organizes training courses for journalists, with the aim of improving the quality of Iraqi media and establishing a free press to support the fledgling Kurdish democracy.



## About the book

Judith Neurink provides intimate personal perspective on the life and working conditions she is confronted with in Iraq as she tries to set up a media centre in the Kurdish city of Suleymania. Initially, she thinks the project will take about a year, but her involvement in the day-to-day concerns of her colleagues deepens. Gradually, she is integrated into a large family and she finds that leaving is no longer a feasible – or desirable – option. She decides to stay.

Judith Neurink, *Mijn Iraakse familie*  
ISBN 978 90 445 1751 4  
Paperback, 288 pages

## Bibliography

*De bange stad (The frightened city)* – 2009 (Non-fiction)  
*Mijn Iraakse familie (My Iraqi family)* – 2011 (Non-fiction)

## Rights

*The frightened city* has been sold to Kurdistan and Lebanon.

## **The press about *The frightened city***

‘Neurink has written a compelling story about these people and gets across how they battle with fear, distrust, and the constraints on their freedom in the Iraqi capital.’ – *BN/De Stem*

‘Last year, Neurink relocated to the Kurdish northern part of Iraq. This, her first novel, has obviously been carefully researched.’ – *Amnesty International*

‘The description of a cruel and fragmented present-day Baghdad is true to life and full of suspense.’ – *NBD*

## **Excerpt from the book**

When someone dies, the family and friends and acquaintances from far and near come together to mourn. Usually, the men and women mourn separately. Sometimes a tent is erected for the women, outside the house, while the men meet in the mosque. This continues for at least three days.

I am able to see what happens in such cases when Kurdo’s father dies a few months later. His mother and sisters, the rest of the family, acquaintances and women from the neighbourhood gather in a large black tent, pitched next to the house. Only women are present, all dressed soberly. A portable speaker amplifies the voice of an imam as he sings Quran verses and recites beautiful texts about the deceased. I shake the hand of Kurdo’s mother to pay my respects and I offer condolences to his sisters. Then I sit down on one of the plastic chairs, between the other women. Trays bearing water are passed around, but nothing else.

The melodious voice of the imam makes me think of my own father, who died of cardiac arrest. Quite a few years have passed, but my eyes mist over nevertheless. I still miss him; in difficult times I often imagine how he would have encouraged me to do what I am doing in Iraq.