

WORLD

IRAQIS MOURN TALENTED RAPPER, DANCER KILLED IN ISIS-CLAIMED BAGHDAD ATTACK

BY **JACK MOORE** ON 7/4/16 AT 10:08 AM
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“After four months of leaving the dance, I went back to dance, to creativity, to my life.” These were the words of Adel Al-Jaf, known by his stage name “Adel Euro,” in a Facebook post on June 25, one week before an Islamic State militant group (ISIS) bomb took his life in Baghdad.

Al-Jaf was one of at least 213 people killed in the Karrada district when a suicide car bomb detonated amid shoppers on Sunday, during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

As Iraqis mourn every life taken in the blasts, many have taken to social media to pay a series of online tributes to Al-Jaf, a burgeoning singer, rapper and filmmaker who had in 2015 survived another bomb blast in the Iraqi capital. He had worked with the New York dance group ‘Battery Dance’ and performed with them previously in the Jordanian capital, Amman. The group said that Al-Jaf was one of their up and coming talents from abroad who it had offered dance tutelage to and that he had planned to move to the U.S. to continue his education.



Adel Al-Jaf, known by his stage name “Adel Euro,” had escaped another bombing in the Iraqi capital in 2015 before Sunday's blast.FACEBOOK

“We mourn the loss of our Iraqi dancer protege Adel Euro—one of over 100 killed today in Baghdad. RIP Adel,” Battery Dance wrote on Facebook. “Adel pursued his passions despite social pressure for him to quit. He spread his love for dance to others in Baghdad, starting a dance academy, and providing a creative outlet for other artists at-risk.”

Al-Jaf used Skype and YouTube to receive dance tips from the founder of Battery Dance, Jonathan Hollander, who mentored him for two years. Inspired by Michael Jackson and Britney Spears, Adel taught himself how to dance in Baghdad and his YouTube account shows a dedicated solo figure, determined to break the mould in a city where a conservative society can inhibit the liberal arts.

Other tributes included one from Iraqi street dancer Yaser Qader, now based in Amman, who wrote on Facebook : “Just another pure life has gone, one of the Iraq boys and truly an inspiration, Adel Euro from an explosion in al

karadah Baghdad. In these holy days what a great death my brother, now you have left this cruel world may your soul rest in peace.” Another Facebook user wrote: “He went to heaven. He became an angel.”

Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi, an Emirati commentator, called Al-Jaf “a multi-talented young Iraqi dancer, filmmaker, rapper, actor and first-rate artist in every sense of the word. Adel was a self-taught performer, having been inspired by Michael Jackson and Britney Spears performing ‘The Way You Make Me Feel’ live on stage in 2001.”

One of his tutors at Battery Dance, Mira Cook, spoke of the loss of her “friend,” calling him “a very creative and innovative dancer, an adamant student and a beautiful person... Rest in peace Adel.”

While Baghdad attempts to come to terms with one of the worst extremist attacks in the past decade amid the government’s continued failure to protect the people of Baghdad from continued ISIS attacks, Adel had spoken about the distress he experienced living in a city of strife and his use of the arts to escape.

“This geographical location in which I live is a storm of destruction, killing, intolerance, lying, hypocrisy, dirty, stupid!” he wrote on Facebook in February. “Because of this thing, I decided to make a private world for me to live away from these people and this storm.”