

Stop Deportations of Kurdish Asylum Seekers Immediately

ECHOS

COALITION TO STOP DEPORTATION TO IRAQ

NEWS LETTER 2

Deportation of Kurdish asylum seekers is an inhumane policy and must be stopped



Demonstrations against deportations Kurdish asylum seekers 9 - 10 February 2007

A number of Kurdish asylum seekers were arrested in the UK cities of Birmingham, Manchester, Hull, Doncaster and Dover while they were reporting to the police station, the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) and Coalition to Stop deportations to Iraq (CSDIraq) held protests against the policy of forcible returns. Activists of the federation from Manchester, Leicester, Liverpool, Peterborough, Nottingham, London, Coventry, Stoke On Trent, Doncaster and Birmingham called demonstrations in different cities, supported by Human Rights campaigners, MPs who support Refugee Rights, and other progressive people in the UK.

The slogans for all the demonstrations during the campaigning were:

Stop Deportation flights to Kurdistan
Hands off Kurdish asylum seekers
Kurdish asylum seekers are victims of war
Iraq is unsafe, Kurdistan is unsafe, full rights for Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers, Stop Deportations – Stop Detentions
Stop Deporting Kurdish asylum seekers immediately
Forcible return is a violation of Human Rights Legislation
Kurdish Asylum Seekers say no to Deportations

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Dashty Jamal of the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, Journey to Kurdistan on January 2007.



Dashty gave a message to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on behalf of the Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers who are facing forcible deportation. Dashty also delivered a message protesting against the agreement between the UK's Home Office and the KRG.

On arrival in Kurdistan Dashty wrote a letter to Nechirvan Barzani who is the head of the KRG explaining the situation of Kurdish asylum seekers in the UK, Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers are not allowed to work and face the constant threat of forced deportation. He also informed him that recently in a meeting with the Home Office (27th November 2006) International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) had demanded that the Home Office stop its policy of forcible deportations to Kurdistan, the Home Office replied that they had signed an agreement with the KRG and the Iraqi Government. He asked Nechirvan Barzani whether this was true and if so He asked him to pull out of this agreement, and to refuse permission for any plane carrying forcibly returned asylum seekers to land.

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NO TO DEPORTATION NO TO DETENTION!

Demonstrations against deportations >>from page 1 In Manchester on Friday 9 February

The FIR (Federation of Iraqi Refugees) organised a demonstration in front of Dallas Court. Burhan Fatah on behalf of the FIR in Manchester gave a speech against the policy of deportations and the current situation in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Leicester Saturday 10 February

In Leicester 400 asylum seekers marched with FIR through the city centre. The demonstration was supported by Leicester Social Forum, Leicester Civil Rights movement, CPGB, Socialist Party, Workers Power. Aram Hamasaid, the representative of FIR in Leicester spoke as did Jasmin Gafour representing FIR Nottingham. Both spoke about the current situation in Iraq and Kurdistan, especially about the violation of human rights, civil war and the occupation. They concluded by thanking all those who supported the demonstration and talked about the importance of solidarity and working together against the policy of deportation. The local media were also present.

London Saturday 10 February

No Borders organised a demonstration outside Colnbrooke detention centre. IFIR and the CSDIraq took part along with different refugee and human rights organisations in the demonstration against detention, the policy of deportation, and demands for refugee rights. A number of demonstrators played musical instruments including drums and whistles.

The slogans were:

International solidarity against borders, Closing down detention centres, Against deportations to Iraq and Afghanistan.

No Borders No Nations Stop Deportation

Dashty Jamal made a speech about his recent visit to Iraq and the political situation there and the dangers of forced deportations.

The following radio stations interviewed Dashty Jamal, Saman Serdem and Sherzad jalal about the deportations: Hawpshty, Shbang, and Naw.

John McDonnell MP also supported and spoke at the demonstration and promised IFIR to write a letter to the Home Office regarding the forced deportations to Kurdistan .

The IFIR will continue campaigning against deportations.

Dashty gave a message >>from page 1

Dashty held two Press conferences one in Sulaimaniyah and the second in Erbil. More than 20 reporters and journalists representing satellite TVs, Kurdish newspapers from different political groups including the PUK and KDP, and independent media attended. The aim was to put more pressure through the media on the KRG to stop the policy of accepting forcibly returned asylum seekers, and to supporting the views of the families of those asylum seekers who are facing deportation, and the views of NGOs and human rights organisations and individuals who support our campaign to stop forcible deportations.

PRESS RELEASE by(CSDIRAQ) Feb 13 2007

Some reports have at last been received about the fate of the asylum seekers forcibly removed to Iraq on February 12 from RAF Brize Norton.

We understand from sources in Erbil that the plane landed not at the normal passenger terminal but in a cargo area, and that journalists and most airport workers were kept away from the area.

Dashty Jamal of International Federation of Iraqi Refugees phoned two of the deportees this evening. The arriving deportees said they were faced with numbers of KDP special police (Asayish) outside the plane. Some were beaten by the airplane guards as they were herded from the plane and on to a waiting bus. They were taken to a hotel which was under the control of the Asayish.. They reported that some were eventually allowed to leave with their family, but those without their family members available are still in the hotel. It is reported that the Asayish are not allowing anyone into the hotel to visit the deportees.

The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees and the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq are very concerned that the British government still sees fit to deport people to Kurdistan, subjecting them to being forced on and off military aircraft. People's families in Erbil did not know where their relatives were for many hours.



PRESS RELEASE >>from pag2

We are also concerned that the KRG authorities facilitated the landing of the plane, and allowed the deportees to be beaten, even though the media in Kurdistan has been full of denials from the PUK and KDP for several days that they had any agreement with the British government to accept people forcibly returned. We fear that these denials, along with the secrecy and media embargo at Erbil airport are aimed at least in part at deceiving the people of Kurdistan about the true policy towards accepting people forcibly removed. We also understand from a Home Office letter to judges dated 2 February that the Home Office has in fact been concerned about the possibility of terrorist attacks on Erbil airport, which hardly supports their argument that the three northern governorates of Iraq are safe to return people.

Kurdistani Nwe (Daily Kurdish Newspaper) correspondent:

Thursday 15/02/2007 No.4195

Two Kurdish failed asylum seekers were interviewed after they were forcibly sent back to Iraqi Kurdistan:

Mohammad Abdulrahman Mustafa, 1976 said he had to leave Iraq in 1999 after his life was threatened that he lived in Liverpool after his asylum claim was fully refused but he continued to report to water Street (immigration department) until he was arrested on the 10th of January 2007 and was taken to few detention centres where he shared a hall with around 700 people from other backgrounds and had to stay in a single bedroom, they were 42 Kurdish detainees when they were taken later, on the 10th of February 2007, by bus to a military airport in Britain and they were sent back to Erbil airport. He said we were handcuffed and ordered to wear bullet proof suits and there were commandos (special military personals) sitting next to each of us inside the plain. And we got off the plain under a very tight security arrangements and accompanied by the British staff only.

Mustafa said I think my life would be in danger and I wonder how can I live when I don't have a house and no money in Kurdistan.

Omed Swara was interviewed as well and he was asking whether there is anything can be done for them!

Hiwa Mahmud

Freelance Translator/ Leeds

October weekly Newspaper interviewed Dashty Jamal following his visit to Iraqi Kurdistan in January 2007.

You have just returned from Iraqi Kurdistan what was the purpose of your trip?

I went to Iraqi Kurdistan representing the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) to speak to as many people as possible to explain the current policy of the UK Government of forcibly deporting Iraqi Kurdish asylum. Before my visit to Iraqi Kurdistan I attended a meeting at the Home Office with representatives from Kurdish and Iraqi communities at this meeting the Home Office was insisting on the legitimacy of the policy of forcibly returning Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers. The Home Office also admitted that they had an agreement with the Kurdistan Regional Government to deport the failed Kurdish asylum seekers. Asylum seekers in the UK are not allowed to work and are given very minimal support. They are often detained for many months prior to removal. Despite the terrible treatment by the British State the Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers still do not want to return to Iraq. IFIR has campaigned against the policy of forcibly returning asylum seekers. The intention of my visit was to strengthen this campaign by involving the Kurdish authorities and the people inside Kurdistan. Whilst I was in Iraqi Kurdistan I held two press conferences in Sulaymania and Erbil where I explained the fear and frustration of Kurdish asylum seekers in the UK. I met many people whilst in Iraqi Kurdistan, many of which were from NGOs. I also wrote a letter to the head of Kurdistan government Nechirvan Barzani which demanded to:

1. Unaccepting any asylum seekers forcibly deported from the UK.
2. Abolish all agreements, with the UK government regarding the deportation of Kurdish asylum seekers.
3. Not to allow Howler airport to be used by the UK Government to return Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers.

I also informed him through my letter that the Home Office is planning to deport a number of Kurdish asylum seekers on 27 Feb 2007 and asked him to put a stop to this scheduled flight to Erbil airport in Iraqi Kurdistan.

What was the reaction of the Kurdish media and Kurdish people?

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interviewed >>from pag3

I was welcomed by all of the people I met, most of them were fully supporting the IFIR campaign. Many of them told us that the Kurdish authority is incompetent and there are insufficient public services and the rate of unemployment is very high. And the Kurdish media also welcomed the IFIR campaign. The Kurdish authorities stated they had not entered into any treaty with the UK Government to accept UK Kurdish asylum seekers. I think we delivered our message and I hope the Kurdish authority will do its duty and not accept the returned Kurdish asylum seekers.

What is the Federation doing to combat the Home Office Policy of forcibly deporting Kurdish asylum seekers, how can the people of Kurdistan contribute in this campaign?

IFIR has organised many demonstrations in different Cities such as London, Manchester, Leister and Nottingham. IFIR has also set up a coalition to stop deportations to Iraq, as part of this work we have contacted and involved many MPs in Britain. IFIR has also informed the UNHCR and European MPs of the ongoing plight of Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers. We contact the number of Refugees and Human right organization to support our campaign. I hope to visit Geneva at the end of February where I will have the opportunity to meet and discuss the UK policy of forcibly returning Kurdish asylum seekers with European MP's. And IFIR has reported to the UNHCR and other asylum organisations in the UK that one of the refused asylum seekers whom last year been deported has been killed by a road bomb in Kirkuk.

We encourage the people to demonstrate in front of the Parliament of Kurdistan and put pressure on the Kurdish authority to refuse all the asylum seekers forcibly returned.

Translate by **Muhammad Mahmood**

Demonstration in front of Brize Norton UK Military base

On the 12 February 2007 the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq, International Federation of Refugees and the Campaign to close down Camps field detention Centre held a

demonstration outside Brize Norton Airfield, Oxford. To protest at the forced removal of UK Iraqi Kurdish Asylum seekers. The demonstration comprised of 50 + demonstrators a mix of Iraqi asylum seekers and Oxford anti deportation campaigners. The demonstration started early at 7am and went on until 9am. Despite the early hour the demonstrators were in fine voice and chanted the following slogans in both English and Kurdish:

Both Dashty Jamal from IFIR and Aram Hamasaid FIR Leicester spoke against the policy of deportation, and against the agreement between the UK Home Office and the Kurdistan Regional Government. Dashty Jamal and Aram Hamasaid gave interviews to the local Oxford media, French media and a Kurdish radio reporter.

After the demonstration broke up at nine a member of FIR stayed behind and filmed 3 coaches arriving at Brize Norton with the Kurdish Asylum seekers inside.

ECHOES

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STOP DEPORTATION FLIGHTS TO KURDISTAN