

ECHOS

COALITION TO STOP DEPORTATION TO IRAQ

NEWS LETTER 8

International Federation For Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) and Coalition to stop deportations to Iraq (CSD Iraq) Campaign of action against Deporting Kurdish Iraqi Refugees



IFIR in conjunction with CSD Iraq has organised a number of events across Europe to highlight the plight of Kurdish Iraqi Refugees across Europe. Several European countries have declined Kurdish Iraqi refugee's claim for asylum, on the grounds that Iraqi Kurdistan is safe. Unfortunately this is not true Iraqi Kurdistan is dominated by lawlessness; administrative and political corruption; oppression and prosecution of political opponents. As a result, thousands of youths in Iraqi Kurdistan have been forced to flee to surrounding countries or to Europe to seek a peaceful life in bearable conditions. A recent report from the US State Department says that people are regularly tortured in Kurdish prisons. The Human Rights record in Iraqi Kurdistan is poor. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have recently released a report that confirms that Kurdistan is unsafe and asylum seekers should not be forcibly deported to Kurdistan. UNHCR and other organizations have sought urgently to highlight the fact that Iraq now contains a huge number of displaced persons, and that about four million people have fled Iraq, many of these from Iraqi Kurdistan.

Campaigners from women's rights and human rights organizations are routinely threatened by both the Kurdish authorities and Islamists in Kurdistan. The internal situation in Kurdistan is, in many ways tense and fragile, and therefore not a suitable place to forcibly return Iraqi refugees to. Iraq including Kurdistan is not safe. Iraqi refugees should not be forcibly returned if they have experienced problems with the PUK, KDP or Islamic groups as they will still be at risk because both the KDP, PUK parties are still in power and the Islamic groups are still active and indeed have recently upped the level of their activity. *Continued on page 2>>>>*

Dashty Jamal's letter to John Reid the UK Home Secretary



The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) and Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq here today yet again to protest in the strongest possible terms against the Home Office's determination to return to Iraq asylum seekers who have been refused protection here.

IFIR is holding a number of demonstrations across Europe. Several European Countries have threatened to forcibly deport Iraqi Kurdish asylum they claim Iraqi Kurdistan is safe and stable. This is sadly not true four million Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan continue to live in uncertainty. The future of the Kurds is unknown. Violation of human rights is ongoing in Kurdistan. Women's is stoning in Kurdistan, this region is dominated by lawlessness, administrative and political corruption, oppression, prosecution of opponents, and shooting at peaceful demonstrations. As a result thousands of youths in Iraqi Kurdistan are forced to flee to surrounding countries or to Europe to seek a peaceful life in bearable conditions A recent report from the US State Department says that people are regularly tortured in Kurdish prisons. The Human Rights record in Iraqi Kurdistan is poor. The UNHCR have recently released a report that in our view confirms that Kurdistan is unsafe and asylum seekers should not be forcibly deported to Kurdistan. *Continued on page 2>>>>*

>>>from page1 IFIR Campaign

The two ruling parties in Kurdistan the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) are not democratic parties and continue to persecute all those who speak against them. The PUK and KDP violate human rights on a daily basis. Unfortunately several European countries, including the UK which has forcibly deported eighty seven Iraqi refugees over the last two years, refuse to accept that Iraqi Kurdistan like the rest of Iraq is unsafe.

The first event organised by the IFIR and CSD Iraq was at the UK Home Office, 2 Marsham St, London 3pm – 5pm Friday 22 June was very well attended and vocal the demonstrators chanted slogans calling for the end of forcible deportation and detention of Iraqi Kurds. The following speakers addressed the lobby:



Dashty Jamal (IFIR and CSDIRAQ) opened the lobby speaking about the events planned by IFIR and CSD Iraq around Europe. IFIR and CSD Iraq will continue to campaign until full refugee status is given to all Iraqi Kurdish refugees living in Europe. Dashty also spoke about the political situation in Iraq and Kurdistan and the problems facing asylum seekers around Europe.

Aso Goran from IFIR spoke about uniting asylum seekers around Europe against the policy of Deportation...

Jean Lambert (Green party MEP), Spoke of the ongoing crises in Iraq and the scandal of the thousands of displaced people from the outcome of the Iraq war that the UK had supported and was now shamefully forcibly returning refugees to a war zone.

Tim Finch (Refugee Council) spoke of the madness of the Home Office's policy when there are thousands of people leaving Iraq everyday. The false economy of detaining and forcibly removing eighty seven is just madness he hoped that the Home Office were beginning to recognise this.

Houzan Mahmoud (Organisation of Women's freedom in Iraq), spoke of the plight of women in Iraq she spoke of Dua a young Kurdish woman of seventeen who was stoned to death by her family in an honour killing.

Arun Kundnani (Institute of Race Relations)

spoke of the past lobbies that IFIR and the Coalition had organised and the importance of continuing to fight for refugee rights.

Dave Landau (No Borders) said other speakers had spoken of the obvious problems with the UK Home Office's policy of deporting refugees back to a war zone. However, his organisation campaigned for the rights of all migrant workers and condemned the shameful way they were treated by both the Home Office and big business working in terrible conditions for well below the minimum wage.

David Jones (DFT-DCLG London branch of the Public Commercial Services Union PCS) offered the full solidarity of the DFT-DCLG London Branch the branch had put a motion to PCS National Conference asking the Union to support the CSD Iraq campaign, but unfortunately the motion was not heard. The Branch would continue to raise the campaign both in the union movement but amongst its three hundred plus thousand members.

Doug Houlton (stop deportation of children) spoke of the hypocrisy of the UK's policy of deporting Iraqi Refugees back to the mess they had helped create and offered his organisations full solidarity. The lobby was filmed by Al-sharkeya stalaet and (Sana TV) following the lobby they interviewed Dashty Jamal, Jean Lambert and some asylum seekers.

>>>>>from page1 letter to John Reid

UNHCR and other organisations have sought urgently to highlight the fact that Iraq now contains a huge number of displaced persons, and that about 4 million people have fled Iraq. Many of these have fled from Kurdistan.

Campaigners from women's rights and human rights organisations are threatened from the Kurdish authorities and the Islamists in Kurdistan. You should be aware from news reports that the internal situation in Kurdistan is in many ways tense and fragile, not one suitable for returns

As we have said before, Iraq including Kurdistan is not safe in general; and in particular, whatever the Home Office and courts have chosen to say, people should not be forcibly returned if they had problems with the PUK and KDP or Islamic groups or other social actors in the past and know they will still be at risk if they go back now. Those parties are still in power, and the Islamic groups are still active and indeed have recently upped the level of their activity. Replies to the International Federation on your behalf by Kathryn Scott and Tom Dodd have been superficial and not actually dealt with the reality of these issues.

Grant the right to stay for all Kurdish and Iraqi asylum seekers and recognize their refugee status officially by the Home office.

Continued on page3>>>

The Swedish Government is responsible for the death of 28 year old Mewan Omar Iraqi Kurdish asylum seeker.



On 2 July 2007 the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) – Gothenburg, International Organisation of Iranian Refugees (IOIR) with the family of Mewan Omar held a rally outside the offices of Gothenburg Postings (GP) Newspaper. The demonstrators held pictures of Mewan Omar and chanted the following slogans;

Swedish Government is responsible for the death of Mewan Omar;

Asylum rights are human rights;

Refugee status for all Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers;

Following the rally Mewan Omar's family, Zuzan Hussien and Hawre Fatah IFIR representatives were interviewed by GP, SVERGE radio station, Zayala regarding the demands of the demonstrators.

Following the rally the demonstrators marched to the place where Mewan Omar's body was found and laid red roses in memory of Mewan.

Campaign to Defend Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers Continues in Sweden

On 28 June 2007 delegates from committee to defend Kurdish asylum seekers;

Hawre Fatah IFIR - Gothenburg; Vejan Karim Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq – Gothenburg; Tofic Mohammed International Organisation of Iranian refugees; met Mr Lars Johansson a member of the Political party Social Democrats in Sweden, Mr Pelle Berglund leader of the council of Immigration of Gothenburg, Mr Hewra Kardwe and Maria a member of the council of Gothenburg. To discuss the situation of Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers in Sweden and the current situation in Iraq

The Committee accused the Swedish Government of violating refugee rights. The Committee ended the meeting saying they hoped that the Swedish Government would grant refugee status to all Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers give rights to all asylum seekers At the end of the meeting the committee handed a letter from Dashty Jamal General Secretary of IFIR with the UNCHR report to Lars Johansson.

Swedish Government is responsible for the death of Mewan Omar A crime against refugee rights



International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) have been informed that the body of Mewan Omar an Iraqi Kurdish refugee has been found. Mewan Omar has been missing for four days. Mewan Omar hanged himself in Olivia, Valhalbat, Sweden.

Mewan claimed asylum in Netherlands and Sweden but, his claim of asylum was rejected in both countries. IFIR blames the Swedish Government for Mewan's death. Mewan became depressed after receiving a letter from the Swedish Government threatening him with deportation. Mewan's death is a human tragedy and an outcome of the policy of the Swedish Government to forcibly deport Iraqi Kurdish refugees

The Death of Mewan should not be forgotten. Human rights campaigners should continue to put pressure on the Swedish government and press them to prevent future tragedies such as Mewan's suicide. Following Mewan's suicide IFIR calls on all human rights campaigners, trade unions and civil rights organizations to join IFIR's campaign against forcibly deporting Iraqi Kurds back to Iraq. This is the time to challenge European governments threatening to deport Iraqi Kurds. IFIR calls on all European countries to grant refugee status to Iraqi Kurdish refugees.

IFIR expresses its sorrow at Mewan's death but will continue to campaign against and challenge the inhumane policies of forcible deportation to Iraq which led to Mewan's death.

>>> *from page2 letter to John Reid*

Abolish all the proposed policies of deportations of Kurdish and Iraqi asylum seekers and lift all pressures of them by the governments.

In the light of the above, we ask you to stop the policy of deportations, release the detainees, and recognise the reality of the situation, which is that people should not be sent back to Iraq.

Our campaign will continue around Europe to fight for Right for the Iraqi and Kurdish asylum seekers, for leave to remain for them, and for an end to destitution, deportations, and the fear of deportation and persecution on return.

Hands off Kurdish Asylum Seekers Now!

IFIR European campaign Stockholm rally of Parliament



On 25 June the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) -Stockholm held a rally outside the Swedish Parliament. The Rally was part of the IFIR European campaign against forcibly deportations of Iraqi Kurdish Refugees across Europe. IFIR also held demonstrations in the following European Cities who are also threatening to forcibly deport Iraqi Kurdish Refugees London, Helsinki and Gothenburg. The slogans used at the Stockholm Rally where; Asylum Rights Are Human Rights; Iraq is Unsafe; Don't deport us to Iraq;

Zuzan Hussain and Ham Khalid IFIR representatives addressed the demonstrators regarding the current situation in Iraq and the plight of Iraqi Refugees in Sweden. At the end of the rally a letter written by Dashty Jamal General Secretary of IFIR addressed to the Swedish Prime Minister and all Swedish MP's was handed in to the Swedish Parliament.

Rally in front of Finland Parliament in Helsinki

On Wednesday 20 June 2007 a number of Iraqi and Kurdish asylum seekers and representatives of refugee organisations held a demonstration in front of Helsinki Parliament.

The slogans used on the demonstration were; No to B permission; No deportations to Iraqi Kurdistan; Iraqi Kurdistan is unsafe;

Following the demonstration a rally was held at which speeches were given by Amnesty International and other refugee organisations, Rebwar Arif IFIR representative – Finland spoke about the political situation in Iraq and why Iraqi Refugees have been forced to leave Iraq. When the speeches finished music was played.

Following the rally Rebwar Arif handed a letter from IFIR - Finland demanding refugee status for all Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers into the Helsinki Parliament. Rebwar was interviewed by the media and TV stations regarding the IFIR European campaign.

Dashty Jamal spoke at an event organised by refugee and Migrant forum as part of refugee week.

Ilford, East London, Refugee migrant forum held an event celebrating refugee week. International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) was part of the event. IFIR put on a slide show highlighting the campaign of IFIR to support Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

Rita chadha a representative from Refugee and Migrant Forum opened the meeting, Dashty Jamal from IFIR spoke about refugee week, refugee rights and the situation of Iraqi asylum seekers in the UK.

ECHOES NEWSLETTER 7

5 JULY 2007

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To Human rights Campaigners,
Trade Unions and Refugee
Organisations

Coalition to Stop Deportation to Iraq (CSDI) needs your help and support in order to continue our activities and campaigns to stop forced deportation to Iraq we are appealing for your help.

Please write cheques to

Coalition to stop Deportations to Iraq

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