

STOP DEPORTATION FLIGHTS TO KURDISTAN/IRAQ

ECHOS

COALITION TO STOP DEPORTATION TO IRAQ

NEWS LETTER 13

52 Iraqi Kurdish Asylum Seekers forcibly deported to Sulaimanya Airport



The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees has received the following reports of Iraqi asylum seekers taken to the airport on 16 June 2008.

Soran Ibrahim from Kurdistan informed us: "After they handcuffed us they took us to an airport outside London, thought to be Stansted. The guards were very rough; my friend was put in an arm lock round his neck as he was forced on to the plane. We were escorted by more than 100 guards on to a German plane. When we arrived at Sulaimania Airport they gave us \$100 and pushed us off the plane. We are not from Sulaimanya. We were taken by taxi to Hawler, but we were arrested at the check point and told we will not be released until we can produce some identity documents."

Dildar Maroof Hassan said; "We were among 7 people pushed off the plane. We are currently being held with two other asylum seekers at Colnbrook. One of our friends' hands are badly bruised." Please support Iraqi asylum seekers and raise your voices and protest against the forcible deportation of Iraqi asylum seekers. We are asking you to send letters to the British Home Office calling on them to:

Free all those asylum seekers who are in prison and detention camps

Stop the deportation policies of Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers, and those asylum seekers to be given the right to defend themselves and their cases.

Stop all the attack and removing all the services from asylum seekers such as their room, the right to work and their social services; those rights of asylum seekers must be protected.

You can send your letters of protest to:

Home Office, 2 Marsham St,
London, SW1P

Fax:00442070354745

and copy to IFIR & csdiraq , PO Box1575, Ilford, IG1 3BZ,
London, email d.jamal@ntlworld.com and

Karen.Johnson@btinternet.com and sarah

sarahp107@hotmail.com parker:

Two days of protest in Refugee Week At Parliament Square against the UK's ongoing policy of deporting Iraqis back to Iraq



The UK Government deported 52 Iraqi Kurds on 16 June 2008 in the same week as refugee week. To protest at the continuing removals to Iraq Voices in the wilderness set up an unauthorised 24-hour "tent city" in Parliament Square on Saturday 21 June to Sunday 22 June. The last two days of Refugee Week to protest against the UK's ongoing policy of deporting Iraqis back to Iraq.

The encampment was made up of twenty tents, gazebos, large banners reading 'Stop Deportations to Iraq' and 'First we destroyed their country ... Now we're sending them back to a war zone`.

Under anti-protest laws in force around Parliament the participants risked a possible £1000 fine for taking part. The Home Office has repeatedly denied Iraqi asylum seekers refugee status and has operated a harsh practice of cutting off assistance, including accommodation and benefits. Last week more than 60 rejected Iraqi asylum seekers were rounded up and detained in what appears to be an accelerated programme of forced deportations.

Camper Jonathan Stevenson said:

"Because of its crucial role in the invasion of Iraq, the British government bears a heavy responsibility for the acutely dangerous situation faced by Iraqis in their own country today.

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REFUGEES ARE NOT CRIMINALS

Yorkshire Morning Star Conference “Workers of all Lands” Saturday 14 June, Swarthmore Education Centre



Against Fortress Britain – the threat posed by BNP, the scape-goating of immigrants and refugees, the erosion of civil liberties, and the need for a labour movement response to the reactionary media agenda in Britain, Chair Joel Heyes

Speakers Rob Griffiths, (General Secretary, Communist Party of Britain), Paul Meszaros (hope not hate Yorkshire), Christine Majid and Jon Burnett (Positive action for refugees and asylum seekers (PAFRAS)), Dashty Jamal Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq).

Joel opened the meeting by speaking about the current political situation leaving the way open for the BNP to organise.

Joel welcomed the first speaker Rob Griffiths General Secretary Communist Party of Britain

Rob defined Fortress UK as a Fortress of cheap labour and employer's exploitation. New Labour's policies have opened the way for right wing parties by their refusal to help working people. When Thatcher played the race card in the 80's she cut the ground from the far right and people voted conservative instead of for the far right candidates. However the reactionary policies of the labour party paved the way for the BNP. If we are to challenge Labour's reactionary policies we must challenge big business interests. There is a crucial role for Trade Unions and Trade Councils to fight fascism.

The next speaker Paul Meszaros from hope not hate Yorkshire Paul opened his speech stating not everyone who votes for fascist parties are fascist. Hope Not Hate Yorkshire plays a similar role as Searchlight only just in Yorkshire.

In the 1930's the fascists had a large organisation, but did not win any seats the same was true of the 1970's. The BNP are the first fascist party to have electoral success. Currently they only have 50 seats, it is not many but they have a big influence. In Keithley they had only 2 councillors, but the council could not make a decision without considering their views. We all know wherever they gain power that racist attacks increase.

Our biggest area of concern is the coming European elections in Lancashire where Nick Griffen is standing they only have to get 8½% of the vote

From the 30's onwards they have been on the fringes of politics, I fear if they make a breakthrough in the European elections they may become a permanent presence in the UK's political system.

Because of the nature of the threat from the BNP is electoral, as much as we do not like Labour's policies in government the only way to defeat the BNP is to back the local Labour party. The slogan the BNP used in Keithley before they took won in the local council elections was

“We are the party your grand fathers voted for when they voted for labour.

The Next Speaker Christine Majid Positive action for refugees and asylum seekers (PAFRAS)

First I will explain the work that PATHROS carries out. PATHROS is a charity based in Harehills Leeds. Harehills is home to the highest number of newly arrived migrants in Leeds. We are the only charity that works with destitute migrants in Leeds. When we were first set up in the 1990's we worked mostly to help migrants with integration issues. However from 2003 when the beginning of rights for claiming asylum started to be eroded, support was stopped for asylum seekers on entry and the withdrawal of legal aid in 2004. This has led to many asylum seekers getting evicted from their homes at the same time in parallel with these changes there has been a culture of denial amongst MP's. I remember Tony Blair's speech saying the rules of the game are changing for asylum seekers. We work with the red-cross to give out meals to homeless asylum seekers many of whom are suffering from malnutrition. I cannot stress strongly enough this is Britain's shame. To give an example of how the scale of the problem has increased in 2005 we dealt with 2000 destitute asylum seekers in 2008 we are dealing with 4000. Britain is returning to the days of the poor laws.

Jon Burnett explained that the whole asylum system was being reconstructed away from helping people into giving services to small businesses to make profit. We have to recognise the state is opening up more space for exploitation. Claims are being fast tracked to such an extent that asylum seekers are not given enough time to present their evidence. Whilst they are awaiting a decision they cannot work or make claims which forces vulnerable people to work on the black market. If they get caught they are put in privately owned detention centres. If their claims fail they are put on private airlines which have no scruples to keep the asylum seekers quiet they sedate them as a matter of course to remove them.

The final speaker was Dashty Jamal Secretary of International Federation of Iraqi Refugees

Dashty gave an overview of the current situation in Iraq and the situation faced by Iraqi asylum seekers in the UK and other European countries. Iraqi asylum seekers in the UK face destitution and forcible deportation.

(Dashty's full speech will be published separately)

To Refugee and humanist organisations, those who demand human rights and all the political parties: defend the right of asylum!



The British Home Office has decided to deport 64 Kurdish asylum seekers by force back to Kurdistan in the next 24hrs to 72 hrs. These asylum seekers are now held inside British prisons and detention camps, despite some of them having families and children.

This morning (16 June 08) Iraqi asylum seekers have been taken from detention centres. Jaza Hama Raeim from Tinsley House contacted International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) at 9am today saying that the Iraqi detainees had been told to collect their property as they were being moved. IFIR has tried to contact Jaza and other asylum seekers in Tinsley House and other detention centres without success, their mobile phones have been switched off all day, we fear this means they have been deported or are about to be deported.

This is not the first time that the British Government has deported Iraqi asylum seekers. The first three Deportations (November 05 to February 07) the asylum seekers were handcuffed and escorted under guard to Brize Norton Military airbase, Oxford to be deported directly back to Erbil airport, in Northern Iraq by military aircraft. As a matter of course the Home Office handcuffed all of the forcibly deported asylum seekers. On the first three flights the asylum seekers reported back to IFIR that during the deportation that they were abused, sworn at and beaten up, before landing the Guards told the asylum seekers to put on flak jackets prior to landing. Seeking asylum is not a crime, asylum seekers should not be treated like criminals. More recently the Home Office has been using Charter flights to return asylum seekers via Jordan using Royal Jordanian Airlines.

The continuing policy of forcible deportation has brought fear to all the Iraqi asylum seekers in Britain today. Many asylum seekers have left their homes and hidden because of fear of getting arrested and getting deported back to one of the most dangerous places in the world. Iraqis have hidden despite the weekly signature system requiring them to sign in at a local police station. The signature system also requires asylum seekers to live in an area decided by the Home Office enabling the Home Office to arrest and detain them at a moments notice.

The forcible deportations are continuing despite the ongoing problems Iraq is facing today. Iraqi society is in chaos, the future of Iraq is in the hands of nationalists and tribal war lords. The instability of the Iraq state is a direct cause of the Iraq war and the continuing occupation by US and British Forces. Until Iraq is stable and safe all Iraqi asylum seekers should be granted the right to remain in Britain. However, for this they need the support from all refugee, humanist, political organisations and parties, and all those who demand human rights. The asylum seekers are waiting for your support and solidarity, therefore we are asking for your help, support and solidarity, in any way you can give.

Please support Iraqi asylum seekers and raise your voices and protest against the forcible deportation of Iraqi asylum seekers. We are asking you to send letters to the British Home Office calling on them to:

Free all those asylum seekers who are in prison and detention camps

Stop the policy of deporting Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers, and allow them the right to defend themselves and their cases.

Stop removing accommodation, the right to work and social services from asylum seekers.

You can send your letters of protest to the address and fax number below

HomeOffice,
2MarshamSt,London,
SW1P

Fax:00442070354745 and copy to IFIR & csdiraq

International Federation of Iraqi Refugees visited Colnbrook detention centre



Aso Goran and Dashty Jamal visited a number of detainees in Colnbrook detention centre.

Aso and Dashty went to talk to asylum seekers who were taken to the airport but were not deported. Dashty and Aso went to listen to their accounts of the removal, to offer solidarity and assure them they were not alone. IFIR and CSD Iraq with Human and Labour Rights campaigners would continue to campaign for their release from detention and their right to be granted refugee status.

>>>from page 1 Two days of protest in Refugee ..



Yet since the 2003 invasion the UK has been one of the key players in forcible returns of Iraqis. We are here this weekend as an act of civil disobedience against these immoral policies of deportation.

International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) activists fully supported Voices by joining the protest Saturday afternoon.

Dashty Jamal Secretary of IFIR made the following speech

“in refugee week the UK home office forcibly deported 52 iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers. refugee week is for as it's the weeks for protest against inhuman rights policy by EU 's country

The UK government is supposed to respect rights for refugees as laid down in the Geneva convention which they have signed. However they have broken their word by returning Iraqi asylum seekers to a war zone. Dashty finished his speech by thanking voices for setting up this protest.

Following Dashty's speech Karen Johnson gave a messege of support on behalf of CSD IRAQ.

The protest was televised by ASO TV the IFIR TV station

Protest letter to Liam Byrne from Konnie lloyd

Dear Liam Byrne,

52 Iraqi Kurdish Asylum Seekers forcibly returned on 16.6.08

As a British citizen and a member of the Labour Party, I wish to register my strongest protest at the forcible repatriation of Iraqi asylum seekers on 16.6.08 by charter flight

on the following grounds:

they may be Iraqi Kurds but they are being dumped in a part of Iraq/Kurdistan which is not their home territory

they were treated with unnecessary force - arm lock around the neck and bruising when handcuffed - shows a lack of training in handling removals.

How dare you send them back without any papers knowing full well that this will lead to their detention in Iraq. What an insult!

As an elderly person, and in the company of many other British citizens, I abhor our shameful asylum policies particularly forcible repatriations and

specifically back to Iraq where we have helped to create the present chaos.

Asylum seekers are not criminals, should not be detained in detention and prison camps, there should be no forcible deportations to Iraq and all asylum seekers should be given a fair hearing which they are at present denied when they seek protection in the UK.

Yours sincerely,

Konnie Lloyd

26, Marlborough Rd

Beeston

Nottingham NG9 2HG

ECHOES

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Editor: Dashty Jamal

Tel: 0044-

07856032991,d.jamal@ntlworld.com

For more information about CSDIRAQ please

Contact: Sarah Parker or Karen Johnson

sarahp107@hotmail.com

karen8johnson@btinternet.com

Manchester: Burhan Fatah, Tel:/ 07756980271,

burhanfatah@aol.com Nottingham: Jasim Ghafur

Tel:/ 07872970807

jasm_rg@yahoo.co.uk

Leicester :Aram Hama Tel:07729182083

aram75dokanie@yahoo.co.uk

www.csdiraq.com

Happy Refugee Week!



Working together towards a better future

Post address:

PO.BOX1575

ILFORD

IG1 3BZ

LONDON UK

Solidarity with Iraqi & Kurdish Asylum seekers