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President Massoud Barzani
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Dear President Barzani,

Re: Deportations to Iraq and the KRG

We were encouraged to hear the Iraqi Government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh, telling the Al-Jazeera news network on 17th October 2009, that, 'we're against forcing them [Iraqi refugees] to be deported', and Dr Hadi Mahmoud, the Kurdistan Regional Government spokesman, saying, on 15th December 2009, 'we will not accept asylum seekers who have been deported by force into our airports', as reported in the Kurdistan Report.

Together with the refusal by the Iraqi Government to accept many of those on the deportation flight to Baghdad from the UK on 15th October 2009, we welcomed these statements, as they seemed to indicate that your governments were both taking a stand against the inhumane policies of the European Governments that force people from their homes in Europe, where many of them have lived for many years, and where they have made lives for themselves with family, friends and work here.

In addition, according to media reports and evidence collected by the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, many of those who have been deported are now living in hiding, in fear of the persecution they originally left Iraq to flee. Some have been assassinated. Others, such as Hussein Ali of Suleymania, have committed suicide only days after being deported. Others, such as Kadir Salih have been kidnapped and killed, while others have had mental breakdowns. Many more have had to leave the country and become refugees again.

However, we have been dismayed to see that since these statements, the Kurdistan Regional Government has accepted at least sixty people deported from the UK, and the Iraqi Government has accepted 77 people deported from Sweden and Denmark. This comes after the KRG has accepted more than 2000 people deported from Europe since 2005, and the Iraqi Government has accepted more than 300 people into Baghdad, after they were deported from their homes in Europe.

These deportations have regularly violated the human rights of those deported and have taken place without any regard for morality. Without any human principles or respect even for their own laws they used handcuffs, anesthetic injections, beatings and racist humiliation. On many occasions they used military flights or cargo planes as though the refugees were war criminals.

We also note that prior to being deported, they have been imprisoned in detention centres for as long as two years.

We also note the comments of Tania Tal'at, a member of the Iraqi Government, saying that the Iraqi government accepts deportations due to a number of protocols signed with the European Governments, through which, if you continue to accept people deported from Europe, you would no longer have to pay back loans borrowed from European Governments by the Saddam Hussein regime. If this is true, you are playing politics with the lives of Iraqi refugees.

By terminating whatever agreements you have made with the European Governments, and refusing to allow them to deport anybody to any part of Iraq, you would back up your principled words, which won you credibility and support among the people of Europe, and you would help to stop the injustice of the detention and deportation of Iraqi people.

We are therefore writing to request you take a stand and make it clear you will not be party to the unjust and inhumane immigration policies of the European Governments, by legally committing your governments not to accept anymore deportations, by closing your airports to them, and by terminating the agreements with European Governments to accept them.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Jennie Formby
National Secretary
Food, Drink and Tobacco Sector