

No to child marriage! Carnival defending rights of children!

On Sunday 30 June 2019 IFIR Kurdistan branch and the Protection Centre in Defence of Children's rights in Kurdistan held a carnival calling for an end to child marriage in Arbat refugee camp in Sulaymaniyah.

This project come into being after Federation activists visited many refugee camps located in Northern Iraq. The activists soon realized that many of the displaced people they spoke too had been forced into arranged marriages against their will.

Amanj Abdulla on behalf of IFIR-KB opened the carnival speaking about aims of the project making the following points:

Raising awareness amongst the families and children living in the camps regarding the rights of children and duties of the adults to protect the children.

Promoting a humanitarian message of coexistence between all the different groups.

Respecting different views and gathering all the different groups under the umbrella of humanity.

Involving the displaced children in different activities teaching them ways of spending their free time creatively in play

Raising awareness amongst the parents with the aim of preventing the forced marriage of their children.



Following Amanj's speech Jamela Abdulka-der spoke on behalf of the Protection Centre in Defence Children's rights in Kurdistan. Jamela spoke about the importance of ending child marriage in Arbat camp and introduced the leaflet regarding the aims of the project.

The Second part of program was performance theatre and singing by 15 children from local schools in Sulaymaniyah.

When the carnival was completed leaflets were distributed to the families regarding the aims of the project.

The project will change the family's thoughts regarding their children's rights.

Reduce violence

**Over the last 5 years IFIR has helped 500 Kurd-
ish citizens who have died & disappeared on the
journey to safety between Turkey & Greece**

154 bodies found

139 their body disappeared

6 missing in Turkey

4 people who committed suicide sent back body from UK
to Kurdistan Region's

One finish citizen committed suicide on the 24 April in



**Open the borders Immedi-
ately to Refugees**

Dashty Jamal sent an open letter to the KRG president, KRG Prime Minister and the Head of KRG Parliament

A call to search for missing refugees.

I would like to draw your attention to the plight and grief of families, some of whose family members are missing in different countries.

A number of refugees from Iraq and Kurdistan, attempting to flee through Turkey and then Greece have disappeared, there is no trace of them. They may have drowned in Aegean Sea and their bodies have not been found and returned to their families. This is a situation, from which many families are suffering. They are in a restless state and impatient, spending their daily lives in uncertainty about the life of those whom they once used to see every day. They count each and every moment, waiting for a news about their missing Children.

What a misfortune, a tragedy and a great sadness it is, that hundreds of people are living under such circumstances.



Though we have tried to find these missing people by taking DNA tests from their families and handing them over to the Greek authorities, our federation has, unfortunately, not been successful in finding these lost people.

The IFIR sees this matter as its responsibility to remind and ask the KRG, to use different channels of its foreign affairs to find these missing people. The IFIR is also ready to provide the KRG with any required and relevant information. The IFIR would like to re-state that this is not the only time that it sends successive Kurdish regional governments open letters regarding refugees.

. In the last years we have asked the KRG Parliament to pass an act to support those refugees who were forcibly deported; a file with five thousand names is available in our Branch in Kurdistan. It was an act to launch a reintegration program, so they could start a normal live again. These people have lost all their livelihoods and they have a families to feed. Some of them have left their properties in the country from which they have been deported. Some of them are suffering from psychological disorders and need medical help. These were the dimensions of the proposed act which has been ignored by the KRG and lies now in its archive. Therefore, we ask the KRG to bring the proposed act of IFIR onto the table of parliament again and act on the demands we have called for. In particular to look for the missing refugees, to comfort their families.

17/6/2019

The office of IFIR of Kurdistan held a meeting in Sulaymaniyah on 19/02/2019

Attendees of the meeting were the IFIR secretary Dashty Jamal, the Representative of IFIR in Kurdistan Amanj Abdullah and the office manager of IFIR in Kurdistan Hawzhin Muhammad. In the meeting, some practical steps were discussed to be taken regarding the implementation of the following points:

1. The Draft Resolution solving the problems of the deported asylum seekers for example to pay deportees compensation or unemployment benefits as proposed by IFIR to the different parliament cabinets of KRG .
2. Creating a list of the deported refugees with psychological disorders to get the help they need.
3. Investigating the life of and helping women who have been brought back to Kurdistan by their husbands and abandoned without their passports with no way to return back to Europe.
4. Prolonging and renewing the work permission permit of the IFIR Kurdistan office.
5. The last phase of the distribution of the humanitarian aids from Denmark to the displaced children in the camps around Sulaymaniyah.



No to racism - long live our humanity

Reaffirming the Declaration of Refugee Rights

IFIR STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REFUGEES:

The 20th of June has been chosen by the UN since 1951 as the International Day of Refugees.

This year, as we commemorate this event, the world witnesses the various atrocities from which people flee and end up being refugees. War, lack of security, militarized states, terrorism, and racism, rise of nationalism, suspensions, destructions, poverty and homelessness are all factors forcing millions of people in different countries to leave their homes and seek refuge. The imperialist powers are trying to re-divide the world and expand their territorial-political influences for which they are ready to unleash atomic war and endanger the overall humanity and this era of civilization.

Sixty eight years since the 1951 Refugee Convention was passed by the UN; the countries which signed the Convention, have not only retreated from it and stopped giving those people who are fleeing persecution refuge, but, they also see the security state of the refugees; home countries as the precondition to give the refugees protection rights. Nevertheless, closing the borders; turning a blind eye to the mass deaths of refugees; cutting services; separating children from their parents; keeping people in refugee camps and isolating the displaced people, has spread many psychological disorders, suicides, under age marriage of children, violence against women and forced deportations of the refugees to the countries they have fled from. Even if those countries, under international pressure, offer the refugees asylum, the right wings of the European governments not only try to blame the refugees for being responsible for the economic crisis, but have promoted nationalism and racism. These governments have created conditions in which fascism and the right parties are strengthened. Thus, as a result, they are spreading hatred, fundamentalist ideology, religious backwardness, violence and the rebirth of ultra-conservative norms which pose a threat to European societies. These parties and governments are attacking the working classes and jeopardizing civil rights and values. They want to reduce the social welfare, force hard-working conditions and prepare to implement political and economy measures of the right and new liberal parties by which the anti-migrant tendencies will be promoted. The events of today's World, war in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Iraq, and the military maneuvers processed in the Middle East and escalating the militarization of the area by the USA due to the rising conflicts with Iran are destabilizing the security of the area



which results in more people seeking refuge. This shows the very outcome of the USA and the European countries policy of war and they have themselves posed the dehumanizing identity of refugee onto these people fleeing from war and injustices. The world doesn't need such terms, unless it is in favor of capitalism.

Therefore, it has been the struggle and duty of each and every freedom loving person to fight for a world, in which people who flee war, poverty and all other types of atrocities can benefit from a safe and secure life, right of settlement and fair living standards.

On the international day of refugees the IFIR puts forward again its own convention which was voted for at the IFIR Congress in Sweden in August 2007. The convention is a significant document to protect the rights of refugees and strengthen the struggle for obtaining equal rights for citizen; freedom of movement and choosing living and work place. The human-made borders must be upheld and everyone should have a chance of a prosper life. We ask that you support us in our mission to realize these aims for solving the issues of refugees.

Definition of a Refugee:

A refugee is anyone who seeks refuge in another country for a safer and freer life as a result of political, social, or economic pressures. While the causes of flight are numerous, reasons are similar in nature and indicative of despotic economic and social systems and regimes. Consequently, anyone who flees war, violence, discrimination, despotism, and the domination of repressive religious, nationalistic and rights violating states or groups - whether state or non-state - must be granted refugee status.

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Dashty Jamal writes a letter of complaint to the General Secretary of United Nations, Antonio Guterres, and the General Secretary of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle, on bleak conditions of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Turkey.

An urgent letter regarding the dreadful life situation of refugees in Turkey

Dear Mr. Guterres and Mr. Welle,

I am writing to complain about the conditions the Syrian and Iraqi refugees are living in Turkey. As IFIR Turkey Representative reports have shown that all Refugees generally and the Iraqi and Syrian refugees specifically are living under unbearable conditions in Turkey. Refugees who have applied for asylum at UNHCR in Ankara are being moved to different cities across Turkey. They are deprived from Human of basic needs. Among these refugees are a considerable number of children, women and people with special needs. The decision of the UNHCR to stop registering people applying for asylum on 10.09.2018 and delivering all its duties of asylum procedures to the Turkish immigration office has brought the refugees to a humanitarian crisis.

We ask you to consider and *act* on the following concerns:

1. The refugees who have not had their first appointment and those who are waiting to be removed to third countries will have to wait for a long unknown period of time during waiting for their applications to be processed.
2. The UNHCR is no longer taking care of the refugees; this has created a huge financial problem for the refugees and their families.
3. Thousands of refugees registered by the UNHCR are being moved to different cities across
4. Turkey has told the refugees they are not allowed to move and travel without the permission of the immigration office. Bus and train terminals have been told not to sell them tickets if they do not have permission from the immigration office.
5. They have no health insurance and they have to pay a lot of money when they visit hospitals and clinics, not to mention the costs of the medicines.
6. They are not allowed to work, while many families need a source of finance to provide health care for their children and family members with special needs. The UNHCR is deaf and blind to helping these people.



United Nations

7. UNHCR is not answering any enquiries from the refugees when asked, they say "we cannot do anything" or they tell the people to visit the Immigration Office. When the refugees go to the Turkish Immigration office, they are told that the Immigration office is processing the application and has no idea when a decision will be made. The UNHCR has sent messages to the refugees mobile saying, they have to go to the Immigration Office and make their claims there and UNHCR cannot do anything anymore.

8. If their claim is refused, they are under threats of deportation. Some immigration offices have told the refugees to ask for a tourist visa otherwise they will be deported. Without listening to them or the reasons why they have left their country and become refugees, they are forced to choose an option between a tourist stay or deportation. The refugee's cases are no longer processed by UNHCR but by the Immigration office of Turkey and we ask the UNHCR to reopen their doors and give urgent interviews to these refugees as soon as possible.

9. Turkey sees the situation as a security matter and does not consider the refugees human rights. Turkey is not a safe place for the refugees; due to this treatment both criminality and suicide have increased amongst the refugee community. There has also been an increase in people attempting to flee to Europe illegally, both by sea via ramshackle yachts or travelling under Lorries putting their own and their families' lives at risk.

10. The following categories of people need to be given urgent interviews, people who are sick or disabled and women experiencing domestic violence or honour threats from their family.

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IFIR Continues to support children in refugee camps in Kurdistan



On the 3rd of March , 7th of April and 1th July 2019, our IFIR Kurdistan Branch and a local organization called 'Movement Against Poverty' distributed toys and clothes to refugee children at Ashty & Arbat Camp in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. One hundred and twenty three children received toys and three boxes of clothing. This was made possible by the generous help of Human Rights activists based in Denmark.

IFIR Celebrates 8th of March International Women's day in U.K, Canada and Switzerland

On the 9th and 10th of March, activists in Zurich, London and Canada held rallies to celebrate International Women's Day in support of refugee women. Activists brought to light the plight of refugee women and children across the world, and the action that needs to be done in order to protect refugee women and girls. IFIR representatives spoke about honour crime and domestic violence. Men and women came together with a united pursuit of raising awareness of the situation of all refugees, and what can be done to provide sustainable and empowering solutions to the international crisis. Poems were read, speeches



. Women who face; psychological; physical; cultural especially those under threat of 'honour' killing or other violence and harassment from misogynist and reactionary states and non-state groups; laws; customs and traditions must be granted refugee status.

The Finnish Government is responsible for the loss of Mr. Fareidun Afsaji's life.

On the late afternoon of Friday 26th April, Kurdish police forces in the City of Raniye in the Northern city of Kurdistan was alerted by the hotel "Beethoven" about an incident. The police found Mr. Afsaji's strangled body and pronounced him dead at the scene. This tragedy happened in a time that the Finnish government was informed about Mr. Afsaji's deteriorating mental health. IFIR is very sad about the needless death of Mr. Afsaji and sends his family our sincere condolences.

Our representatives and Mr. Afsaji's family warned and informed the Finnish government several times. The Finnish health system registry also had medical records of Mr. Afsaji's mental health, and was fully aware of his condition. The Finnish government ignored ours and Mr. Afsaji's family's warnings, never taking his case seriously. As a result of this, the government's ignorance cost Mr. Afsaji his life.

If the government had taken the bare minimum responsibility of its citizens that suffer from mental health issues, Mr. Afsaji's death could have been avoided. The International Federation of Iraqi refugees condemns the ignorance of the Finnish government in Mr. Afsaji's case which cost him his life and



we are demanding a thorough investigation by the Finnish Government and Supreme Court of Finland to find out how his plea for help was ignored.

On the 6th of May 2019, the General Secretary of International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR) Dashty Jamal, held a memorial to honour Mr. Afsaji's life and struggle for freedom. Mr. Jamal, alongside members of Mr. Afsaji's family paid tribute with speeches and a proper burial in Kurdistan in early May. The Finnish Government has yet to respond to Afsaji's tragic death, with no formal recognition of his passing, nor their lack of willingness to come to his aid.

Two bodies returned to Kurdistan

Kurdish Refugee found 7 January in Bradford hotel returned back to Kurdistan

Mr Saman a 30 year old refugee who came to the UK 3 years ago was found dead in a hotel room in Bradford on 7 January. IFIR was informed that Mr Saman had been experiencing serious mental health issues which led to him being put in a mental health hospital for 2 weeks. He was released from the hospital on the 5 January. Two days later he locked himself in a hotel room in Bradford where his body was found several hours later. Mr Saman's death is still under investigation by the police

IFIR was contacted by Saman's friends in the UK. IFIR spoke to his parents who said they wanted their son's body returned to them in Kurdistan. IFIR launched a collection with help from Saman's friends to raise funds to ensure Saman's body could be returned home. Yesterday (Friday the 18th of January) IFIR Secretary Dashty Jamal alongside friends of Saman carried out Saman's parent's request that Saman's body be returned home to Kurdistan. Tomorrow Saman's body will arrive at Erbil airport at 4.10 AM

Aram Ali

Aram was only 41 years old when he took his own life. Aram had only lived in the UK for 2 years when he committed suicide in Birmingham. IFIR launched a campaign to raise money in order to ensure he was returned home to Sulaymaniyah. Aram returned home on the 1 February 2019.

IFIR sends a special thank you to Haji Adnam without whom we would not have been able to return Sama and Aram home.

IFIR offers sincere condolences to Saman and Aram's parents and thanks everyone who helped in making it possible to have their bodies returned to Kurdistan.

<<<from page 3 Reaffirming the Declaration of Refugee Rights

General Principles:

1. Anyone who faces state or non-state discrimination, harassment, persecution, violence, intimidation, abuse, and rights violations because of race, ethnicity, sexuality, sex, religion, or political, social, and economic reasons must be granted refugee status.
2. No government has the right to close its borders to asylum seekers.
3. Children who flee under any circumstance either with or without their parents must be immediately granted refugee status. In addition children asylum seekers should be cared for by the state and given free housing, education, health care, sports and recreation equivalent to those provided to citizens of the country they are applying for asylum within. These rights should not be deferred or conditional upon the granting of refugee status.
4. Women who face; psychological; physical; cultural especially those under threat of 'honour' killing or other violence and harassment from misogynist and reactionary states and non-state groups; laws; customs and traditions must be granted refugee status.
5. In countries where military 'service' is compulsory and refusal to serve can lead to imprisonment. Any person refusing to take part in military service must be granted refugee status.
6. The criteria for breaking the laws of the country of origin is not determined solely by transgressions of discriminatory, misogynist, religious, and anti-children laws. Political, cultural and union activities cannot be deemed crimes under any circumstances. Universal rights laws in existence in the most advanced Western European countries must be the criteria used.
7. Anyone who may face detention, arrest or persecution if returned to her/his country of origin because of choices within her/his private life or if an asylum seeker joins a political party and takes part in political activities that would endanger them if returned to their home country must be granted refugee status.
8. War criminals, heads of states and those who have committed atrocities and murders must not be deported to their countries of origin as long as execution and torture exist. However, they must be tried and sentenced in accordance with the laws of a country where execution and torture have been abolished.
9. All women and girls and children under the age of 18 who have fled Islamic societies must be unconditionally granted refugee status.

10. Lack of identification or evidentiary documentation and or even use of fraudulent and illegal documentation by asylum seekers should not be classed as a crime and must not have an adverse effect on the granting of refugee status. Furthermore, having a passport and legally exiting country of origin cannot prevent someone from being granted refugee status.

11. Every asylum seeker has the right to have her/his claim reviewed in the country in which s/he has applied for refugee status. Passing through other countries cannot prevent the granting of refugee status in the country in which the claimant has applied for refugee status. Choosing one's city and place of residence is the right of all asylum seekers and must not be violated.

12. All asylum seekers must have the right to fair determination procedures. All asylum seekers must be granted free legal services namely attorneys and interpreters, and must be given access to comprehensive information on the determination procedures. Entitlement to existing social and welfare rights, including the right to work, education, health care, and unemployment is part of the basic rights of every asylum seeker.

13. No asylum seeker can be prosecuted or imprisoned for being an asylum seeker and or entering without proper or legal documentation. If an asylum seeker commits a criminal offence in the country where s/he has applied for asylum, s/he must be tried in accordance with the laws of that country in that country.

14. All refugees have the right to family reunification. The refugee's family has the right to obtain refugee status.

15. Former political prisoners and persons who have been tortured must be granted refugee status without taking into consideration whether they have a fear of persecution at the time when they applied for asylum. A certification letter from a political opposition party or group must be considered adequate by the determining authorities in granting refugee status. In cases when the asylum seeker is unable to obtain a certification letter from the organisation or party s/he was active with in the past because of political differences, a certification letter from other opposition parties or organisations must be accepted by the determining authorities.

16. No asylum seeker can be detained or deported under any circumstances .

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No to Detention ! No to Deportation ! No to Racism

<<<from page 7Reaffirming the Declaration of Refugee Rights

17. Freedom of speech, assembly and organisation and political and social activities equivalent to standards in the country of asylum for citizens must be granted all asylum seekers. Governments are duty-bound to protect the security of activists from any form of terrorist or racist attack.

18. All state or non-state racist and xenophobic propaganda against refugees and asylum seekers must be prohibited.

19. Governments must provide the necessary resources in a systematic and planned manner in order to expedite the assimilation of refugees and asylum seekers in society and ensure individual and social rights equal to citizens for asylum seekers and refugees. Refugees and asylum seekers must not be segregated and isolated from society and progressive culture under the name of cultural relativism based on nationality, culture and religion. The creation of ghettos for refugees and asylum seekers must be prohibited as must implementing a culturally relativist policy towards asylum seekers and refugees.

20. All asylum seekers must have the right to access to all facilities such as: education and health.

21. Religion should not be imposed and physical violence is prohibited in imposing of any kinds of religions. Children should not be taught religion at school and state funding to religious centres under the justification of cultural relativism should be stopped.

The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees asks all freedom loving people, human rights organisations, political parties, labour organisations and those supporting refugee rights to play a more effective role in the struggle for securing these rights by reiterating and actively defending the above demands through helping the Federation in their struggle for refugee rights.

>>>from page 4 An urgent letter regarding the dreadful life situation of refugees in Turkey

We send you this letter to ask that you:

1. Instruct the UNHCR in Turkey to resume its work helping refugees
2. To open the doors of UNHCR again for the registration of new refugees, direct processing applications, providing them with food and health care, giving them work permissions, free movement rights within Turkey and releasing all detained refugees.

3. Enabling flight departure for the refugees who have been given asylum in the third countries 4. Call on European countries to accept their responsibility and offer refugees a permanent home.

We are awaiting your reply and your practical steps towards solving these problems and improving the lives of the refugees in Turkey.

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No to child marriage-IFIR Carnival for defending rights of children

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