

# FEDERATION



November 2009

PAPER OF INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF IRAQI REFUGEES-IFIR ISSUE 9

## Dashty Jamal letter to Fredrik Reinfeldt Swedish prime minister



I am writing this letter on behalf of the International Federation of Iraqi refugees to bring to your attention the treatment of Iraqi refugees in Sweden and protest at your Government's policy of forcible deportation to Iraq. We have been informed that there are 250 Iraqi refugees held at Fleen, Stockholm and Kolaret detention centres. We understand that some of them are to be forcibly deported to Baghdad today (17-11-2009)

In the last two years Sweden has returned more than 200 people by charter flight to Baghdad. Baghdad is one of the most insecure cities in Iraq, yet the Swedish Government returned a disabled man to Baghdad in October 2008. In December the Swedish authorities imprisoned and detained a pregnant woman. Mewan Omer who committed suicide in Gottenburg rather than be deported back to Iraq. Soran Omer died of exposure because he did not have a place to live in Sweden. The Federation has received reports from returned asylum seekers who have been kidnapped or killed, many more are forced into hiding in Iraq.

We understand that the Swedish Government has made an agreement with the Iraqi Government, to return people back to a war zone. This agreement between the Swedish Government and Iraqi Government is trading Iraqi refugees' lives for financial gain. This is shameful particularly when the Iraqi Government are unable to provide security and safety for their citizens >>>>continued on page 7

## 700 people gathered to protest in Gothenburg against the forcible deportation of Iraqi refugees seeking asylum in Sweden



IFIR Gothenburg, Party of Justice, International Iranian Refugee Organisation and No one is illegal held a demonstration in Gothenburg attended by 700 people. The demonstrators were protesting at the Swedish Governments threat to forcibly deport Iraqi and Kurdish refugees. The demonstrators marched from Gothenburg library to the City Centre.

At the end of the demonstration Rebwar Hussen, Tofigh Muhammadi were among the speakers that addressed the demonstrators:

Rebwar Hussen IFIR Gothenburg representative thanked everyone who attended the demonstration. And spoke about the following issues: the bad conditions facing Iraqi refugees who live in Sweden;

the current political situation; deteriorating security in Iraq under the occupation; threats from armed militia, lack of basic services in Iraq;

all of these factors have lead to the displacement of millions of Iraqi's.

Rebwar finished his speech by strongly criticising the positions of the Iraqi government in Sweden for agreeing to accept forcible deportation of Iraqi refugees.

>>>>continued on page 3

Support IFIR campaign against deportation by Swedish Government

## IFIR held Conference for activists in Zurich



IFIR secretariat held a conference for IFIR activists from around the world. IFIR Activists attended from Finland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, UK and Canada.

The aim of the conference was to: Unite IFIR activists,

Discuss changing IFIR policy towards refugee rights,

Make steps towards a strong and organised movement around refugee rights. That organises and unifies refugees against forcible deportation policies. That utilizes the help and solidarity of freedom loving people and human rights organizations. To achieve this we need to make a clear stand on a human rights agenda.

The conference was opened by Dashty Jamal Secretary of IFIR. Dashty discussed the current problems facing refugees.

He spoke about how activists watch the new policy changes about refugee right in the world. Dashty spoke about IFIR's solution to fight for refugee rights with the working class movement and progressive forces in the world to bring back the right to free movement and to stand for universal human rights. He urged all advocates of human rights to join IFIR and strengthen the campaign to end the discrimination faced by refugees and asylum seekers.

Seminar One – forming new IFIR policy regarding Refugee Rights

Rebwar Arif, Jamal Koshish, Dashty Jamal held a seminar calling for: new policy regarding refugee rights across the world and the solution of IFIR; the Importance of changing IFIR from a campaigning organization to an organization that has answers for the many problems faced by Iraqi refugees today.>>>>

to help Iraqi refugees integrate into society;

IFIR works as an important umbrella group that supports women rights, against honour killing and honour crime, support children rights, also supports progressive organisations in Iraqi to set up a secular government. To achieve equality for every one, support freedom of speech, freedom for press show IFIR working with other organizations for supporting refugee rights.

Seminar Two - media

Aso Goran, shahab Hamed, Jamal koshish held a seminar about IFIR press, media. IFIR website and paper and ASO TV.

Rebwar Arif,Ahmad Ali spoke about the IFIR organization. The importance of building IFIR branches across Europe.

The conference agreed to build a campaign against the agreement between several European countries the Iraqi Government and KRG about deporting Iraqi refugees.

We believe that there are many people who have high expectations of this conference and its outcomes. Let's work together to defend the rights of asylum seekers and refugees across the world. We encourage all MPs, trade union activists and human rights campaigners to come forward in order to organize a new and strong front to defend and challenge the inhumane policies toward refugees and asylum seekers. By this kind of front and adopting a new agenda, we will be able to end the suffering of many vulnerable people across the world. The Federation is willing and determined to work for refugees across the world, the Federation is not alone in this struggle we have the support of everyone who is here today Refugee rights campaigners, MP's MEP's Trade Unionists. We urge all humanitarian advocates to join us and strengthen our campaign to end the catastrophe of refugees and asylum seekers. This conference believes that everyone is entitled to travel and live wherever he or she wants to live. able to outline a new agenda and produce new policies in order to empower the Federation and do our best in the future to change and improve the lives of many.

An the end of conference Nadr Abdull hamed, Samera Ahmad, Foad Aziz, shamal, Shahab Hamed, Mostafa Hassan, Rzgar Hama and Khalid , were elected to the secretariat of IFIR.

**Freedom of Movement is every body's right**

## **Iraqi detainee attempts suicide to stop being taken on mass deportation flight to Northern Iraq**



Ibrahim Ali Karim, an Iraqi refugee being held in Colnbrook detention centre, tried to commit suicide last night when staff told him he was going to be deported to Iraqi Kurdistan the next day. He told the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees: ‘they came in and told us they were going to send us back the next day. I tried to get to the kettle and put my hand in it but the guards dragged me away. I’ve lived in Yorkshire for five years and it’s my home. I left Iraq because an Islamic group were threatening me. I don’t even have any family there now.’

Other people in Colnbrook and Brook House complained about violent treatment at the hands of security guards who came to move them at the same time. However early this morning detainees were told by detention centre staff the flight had been cancelled and they would not be deported. They have since been moved out of short term holding, where they were taken last night, and back to long term holding in the detention centre.

Dashty Jamal of the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees says:

‘the UK government wants to convince the British people that Baghdad is safe and that their war has brought democracy and security to the country even as Iraq descends further into sectarian violence and a cycle of killing. Once again we are asking people to stand against these policies. People should not be forced back to any part of Iraq.

Richard Whittell of the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq says:

‘while it condemns the racism of the BNP on Question Time the UK Government, is deporting and imprisoning people simply because of where they

forced back to any part of Iraq.

Richard Whittell of the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq says:

‘while it condemns the racism of the BNP on Question Time the UK Government, is deporting and imprisoning people simply because of where they were born. All Iraqi detainees should be released from detention immediately.

### **Air Italy will fly no more charter flight for UKBA!**

**IFIR received this article from NCADC**

Following the UK government's mass deportation by charter flight to the Iraq warzone last week (<http://tinyurl.com/yf3zmsy>), NCADC called on supporters to make their feelings known to the contracted Airline, Air Italy. You did. And the response from the company?

Dear Mr O

We paid a lot of attention at your e-mail and I inform you that in future we will refuse to operate air transport with asylum seekers or refugees. The flight reported was our first and last experience. I take this opportunity to give you greetings and best wishes for your noble cause.

Francesco Cesari, Ground Operation Post Holder, Air Italy

[Francesco.Cesari@AirItaly##](mailto:Francesco.Cesari@AirItaly##)

### **>>>from Page 1 700 people gathered to protest in Gothenburg against the forcible deportation of Iraqi refugees in Sweden**

Tofigh muhammadi Gothenburg representative from the International Iranian Refugee Organisation spoke about the importance of continuing to organize these demonstrations. Tofigh also criticised the Swedish Government for its continuing policies against refugees.

The protesters made the following demands:

Stop the deportation of Iraqi refugees immediately;

Grant protection to all Iraqi and Kurdish people

Recognize all Iraqi refugees as victims of war

Allow Iraqi refugees the right to work or to receive a decent level of benefit,

Immediately Release the remaining Iraqi and Kurdish refugees held in detention and let them return to their homes in the Sweden.

Assist disabled Iraqi Refugees

**Stop Deportation Flight to Iraqi**



## **IFIR held Demonstration in front of Iraqi Embassy in London calling on the Iraqi Government to stop agreements with European governments to accept returned Iraqi refugees.**



On the 7 September 2009 IFIR held demonstration in front of the Iraqi Embassy in London. The demonstration was called to protest at the agreement that had been signed with several EU countries to return Iraqi refugees.

The protesters chanted the following slogans:

Stop agreement with EU countries that plays with the lives of Iraqi refugees;

Iraq is unsafe - Kurdistan is Unsafe;

Asylum rights are human rights - Iraqi refugees say no to deportation;

Hands off Iraqi refugees - Iraqi refugees are victims of war and occupation.

The following people made speeches:

Aso Goran a member of the IFIR Secretariat made a speech regarding the situation of Iraqi refugees.

Dashty Jamal IFIR secretary spoke about the agreement of the Iraqi government with several EU countries. The continuing dangers of policy of deportation and how this policy supports terrorism, also he said our campaign will continue until this inhuman policy is stopped.

Alberto and Richard offered their solidarity to Iraqi refugees

At the end of the demonstration Dashty Jamal passed a letter to the Iraqi ambassador. The letter demanded that the Iraqi Government stopped colluding with European countries to forcibly deport Iraqi refugees.

**Hands off Iraqi refugees now!**

## **Thirty failed asylum seekers to be sent back to Iraq, says refugee group** **Thirty failed asylum seekers to be sent back to Iraq, says refugee group**

Removal of Iraqis from detention centers for expulsion flight expected later this week

[By Owen Bowcott](#) on Tuesday 13 October

2009 which is published by the Guardian

The UK Border Agency is preparing to send the first, mass deportation flight returning failed asylum seekers to Baghdad and southern [Iraq](#), according to a refugee organisation that monitors expulsions.

The removal of at least 30 Iraqis from UK detention centres is expected later this week, the International Federation of Iraqi [Refugees](#) claims. They are being gathered at Brook House immigration removal centre near Gatwick and have been told they will leave soon.

Previous charter flights carrying deportees have flown into the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, which has been relatively peaceful since the 2003 US and UK-led invasion. Those deported have all been from the region.

The Home Office has in the past drawn a sharp distinction between the area governed by the Kurdish regional government (KRG) and the main part of Iraq, which has been repeatedly targeted by suicide bombers. Thousands of Iraqi asylum seekers remain in the UK awaiting decisions on their removal.

The United Nations high commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) recently criticised the Danish and Swedish governments for sending failed Iraqi asylum seekers back to central Iraq on the grounds that the area was still dangerous and returns were contrary to the agency's guidelines.

Current UNHCR advice is that failed asylum seekers may be returned to the southern governorates of Iraq and the Kurdish region in the north if they have local family support. The five governorates, or provinces, in central Iraq are still considered too dangerous for repatriations.

The IFIR, which follows deportations closely, said detainees in Brook House and Colnbrook immigration removal centres had been handed paperwork and the destination had been entered as "Iraq" rather than the normal "KRG". A spokesman for the IFIR said: "Approximately 30 people are being held in Brook House and >>>page 5

**Stop agreement with EU countries that plays with the lives of Iraqi refugees**

## **Protest outside the Home Office October 2009**



**IFIR, Coalition to stop Deportations to Iraq** with the No Deportation network organized a protest outside the Home Office. To support the Iraqi asylum seekers who were still being held in detention centers despite the fact the Iraqi authorities had refused to accept the asylum seekers off the flight. The returned asylum seekers were now on hunger strike and had asked for support.

### **Dashty Jamal secretary of IFIR speech in demo in front of Home office London:**

On behalf of the International Federation of Iraqi refugees I would like to thank you all for coming here today to support the rights of Iraqi refugees. I would like to congratulate everyone who helped organize this demonstration and who has been involved in supporting the returned people from Baghdad in particular the Stop Deportation campaign. Yesterday was a dark day for Iraqi people in Baghdad. Two car bombs killing at least 150 people with more than 600 injured. On behalf of IFIR I send our regards and deepest condolences to those who have lost their family and loved ones.

It's a shame following 6 years of war that the UK and other European governments are saying Iraq is a safe place to return refugees to. Where is safe in Iraq? Where the security forces when innocent people are being killed daily. The people of Iraq have paid the price of a brutal and bloody war. The occupying forces including some of the same European countries are currently responsible for the daily suffering of the Iraqi people and must take responsibility.

Iraq today is suffering from the effects of the continuing occupation and militia government who build on the based off agreement between the nation and religions group. The war and the >>>>

occupation have turned Iraq from a large modern society in to a jungle. The war that the US and UK governments and their allies started against the people of Iraq has so far claimed the lives of thousands of victims. Thousands more have been made homeless, displaced and forced to leave the country, and millions are left to live in insecurity and confusion, deprived of the most basic rights.

The Home Office in the last 4 years started to send back refugees to Iraq claiming that Iraq, and the Kurdish region in particular are safe. Iraqi refugees have been detained like criminals. The Home Office must stop this policy of forcible deportation.

We must build an international campaign between human and refugee rights campaigners and all freedom loving people to fight for equality, dignity and freedom of movement for all!

Long live our struggle!

### **>>>from page4 Thirty failed asylum seekers to be sent back to Iraq**

immigration removal centres had been handed paperwork and the destination had been entered as "Iraq" rather the normal "KRG".

A spokesman for the IFIR said: "Approximately 30 people are being held in Brook House and Colnbrook immigration detention centres around London and have been given deportation tickets informing them they will be removed to Iraq sometime this week."

One detainee, called Karim, who has been given a deportation ticket, said: "How can they be sending me back to Baghdad? There were three car bombs there on the news yesterday. I have a girlfriend, friends and a life here. I don't know anyone in Baghdad. The only people I know in Iraq are in Kirkuk, hundreds of miles away."

Another, Adnan Hamarashi, 26, in Brook House, said: "A lot of the people here who have been told they are going are from southern Iraq. I have been in Britain for seven years. I don't want to go back; it's extremely dangerous."

The Home Office declined to comment on the suggestion the Border Agency was about to change its policy on deportations to Iraq. "We do not comment on operations or flights before they happen," said a spokesman.

**Stop Violating Refugee Rights**

**Iraqi Refugees are victims of war and occupation**

## **Letter to Alan Johnson, Home Secretary on 26 October 2009**



The first mass deportation flight to Baghdad carried around 40 people early on Thursday, 15th October, on a specially chartered plane provided by Air Italy. We have since learnt that 10 of the deportees were taken off the flight in Baghdad while the rest were not accepted by the Iraqi government and were flown back to detention in the UK. A Home Office statement said they will "iron out" the difficulties they faced and "expect to carry out another flight."

Despite its failure, the Baghdad deportation flight marks a shift in government policy, which since 2005 has been deporting people back to Iraqi Kurdistan but not to Iraq. Now they have begun, deportations to Iraq are sure to continue putting the lives of many in danger. Only yesterday, 25th October more than 160 people were killed and many more injured by a suicide car bomb in Baghdad and on the 11th October, three car bombs exploded in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi, killing at least 19 people. Violence and bloodshed continue throughout the country, which saw 1,891 civilian deaths in the first six months of this year alone. There are also widespread food shortages, lack of access to clean drinking water and other grave humanitarian crises in many areas.

We are writing today, after yesterday's demonstration, from the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees and the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq, representing another 25 organisations and MPs who have signed a statement to stop deportations to Iraq, to make the following demands as regarding Iraqi and Kurdish Refugees:

- Stop deportations to Iraq immediately
- Grant protection to all Iraqi and Kurdish people and recognise them as victims of war
- Allow them the right to work or to receive a decent level of benefit
- Immediately release the remaining Iraqi and Kurdish refugees held in detention and let them return to

Iraqi and Kurdish Refugees:

Stop deportations to Iraq immediately

Grant protection to all Iraqi and Kurdish people and recognise them as victims of war

Allow them the right to work or to receive a decent level of benefit

Immediately release the remaining Iraqi and Kurdish refugees held in detention and let them return to their homes in the UK

Please contact us if you have need any further information.

Dashty Jamal Secretary International Federation of Iraqi Refugees

Richard Whittle -CSDIraq

**Press release**

**17/11/2009**

**Swedish Iraqi detainees have been informed that they will be forcibly send back to Baghdad today.**

Iraqi refugees held in Fleen, Stockholm and Kollaret detention centres have been informed by the Swedish authorities that they will be forcibly returned to Baghdad today (17th November 09).

In the last two years Sweden has returned more than 200 people via charter flight to Baghdad. Baghdad is one of the most insecure cities in Iraq, yet the Swedish Government returned a disabled man to Baghdad in October 2008. In December the Swedish authorities imprisoned and detained a pregnant woman. The Swedish government's immigration policy destroys lives. Mewan Omer committed suicide in Gottenburg rather than be deported back to Iraq. Soran Omer died of exposure because he did not have place to live in sweden. The Federation has received reports from returned asylum seekers who have been kidnapped or killed, many more are forced into hiding in Iraq.

IFIR condemns this action and requests that all human rights and refugees' rights organisations send letters to the Moderate Government calling for the following demands which are supported by many progressive human and refugees' rights organisations in Sweden:

Stop deportations to Iraq

Grant protection to all Iraqi and Kurdish refugees and recognise them as victims of war.

Allow Iraqi refugees the right to work or to receive a decent level of benefit

Provide support for disabled Iraqis

Immediately release the remaining Iraqi refugees held in detention

**Solidarity with Iraqi Refugees**



>>>>from page 1 **Dashty Jamal letter to Fredrik Reinfeldt Swedish prime minister**

Still they make such a dishonest deal for money in exchange for the future of Iraqi refugee's lives.

The Iraqis' need for asylum is the result of an invasion and occupation in which the USA and British government and other European countries are not only involved but are also responsible. The continuing war, terrorism, occupation and dismantlement of society, is dividing the people of Iraq on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, and sect, and putting the fate of the Iraqis in the hands of various Islamic, nationalist, tribal and sectarian groups and parties, depriving women and children of their rights, keeping people in poverty and trampling upon the freedoms and civil and individual rights of the people in Iraq: all these factors are causing instability and war. This is the situation which prompts many Iraqis to flee Iraq. In other words, as long as the situation is not changed, and the American and British forces follow the policy of expansion and war, the people of Iraq are left little choice but to leave Iraq. It is a shame following 6 years of war that the UK and other European governments are saying Iraq is a safe place to return refugees to. Where is safe in Iraq? The people of Iraq have paid the price of a brutal and bloody war. The occupying forces, including some of the European countries, are currently responsible for the daily suffering of the Iraqi people and must take responsibility.

The 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009 was a dark day for Iraqi people in Baghdad. Two car bombs killed at least 150 people with more than 600 injured. Yet still the Moderate Government returns people back to Iraq to the very same city where these bombs exploded. This policy adds Sweden to the list of Countries who have forcibly deported Iraqi refugees back to the war torn country they have escaped. The Swedish Government claims that Iraq is a safe country to return asylum seekers to. We know this is not true; Iraqi refugees have fled from a country of war, occupation and insecurity. They flee because of daily terrorism inflicted by the occupation and the ruling parties of Iraq. Asylum seekers are not criminals they are just looking for safety, security and a better life. This policy is putting Sweden on the list of European Countries that break the Geneva Convention and European Human Rights charter on the treatment of refugees.

We know that Sweden has given asylum to many Iraqi refugees and ask you to reconsider forcibly deporting asylum seekers back to Iraq. Many Iraqi refugees living in Sweden have built a new life and have integrated into Swedish society. Many of those who face deportation have children who have gone to school in Sweden and are very upset at the prospect of being taken from their schools and ripped away from the only friends they have known in Sweden.

We want to ask the Swedish government once again to look into this policy. We call on the Moderate Party to honour the following demands which are supported by many progressive human and refugees' rights organisations in Sweden:

Stop deportations to Iraq

Grant protection to all Iraqi and Kurdish refugees and recognise them as victims of war.

Allow Iraqi refugees the right to work or to receive a decent level of benefit

Provide support for disabled Iraqis

Immediately release the remaining Iraqi refugees held in detention

Regards,

**To Human rights Campaigners,  
Trade Unions and Refugee Organisations,**

**International Federation of Iraqi Refugees-IFIR 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**

**Our Postal Address is:  
PO BOX 1575, ILFORD, IG13BZ, LONDON, UK.**

**Refugees Rights are Human Rights**

**Editor: Dashty Jamal : 20 November 2009**

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### **branch meeting 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees was founded by Iraqi activists following the Second Gulf War to defend the rights of the Iraqi refugees who were forced to leave Iraq. Many Iraqi refugees were forced into camps. The Federation did its best to address the problems facing Iraqi refugees at that time. The Federation helped them to reach safe countries. As a result of the Iraqi refugee crises in the 1990's the Federation opened many branches in countries where the Iraqi refugees settled such as Canada, Australia and many European countries including the UK. Until 2004 the Federation was a self help community organization for Iraqis helping the existing Iraqi community and helping Iraqis fleeing the Saddam regime. This work consisted of helping the Iraqi refugees settle into their new countries and performed helpful functions such as sign posting Iraqi refugees to services health care, housing, legal help and translation work. However following the 2004 invasion of Iraq, Iraqis found their claims for asylum were being turned down. In 2005 the UK Government started a so called voluntary return scheme. Iraqi asylum seekers that were denied the right to work or claim any assistance were offered money to return to Iraq a now war torn country. The first forcible deportation took place from the military airbase Brize Norton in Oxford in November 2005. To combat this threat the Federation set up the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq in January 2006.

It is clear that the Government were not sure of the conditions they were flying into when they started deporting asylum seekers back to Iraq. The first three flights were all by military aircraft and the asylum seekers were given flak jackets prior to landing. The British Government soon moved to using mass deportation charter flights deporting 50 to 60 asylum seekers a month. Over the last couple of years they have been removing asylum seekers weekly via Royal Jordanian charter flights to Amman and then on to the Kurdish region of Iraq. Until the recent widely reported flight to Baghdad all forcible deportations flights from the UK were to the Kurdish region of Iraq.

That is not to say that the UK flight that was returned to the UK with the asylum seekers still on board was the first deportation flight to Baghdad. European countries such as Sweden have chartered several flights to Baghdad that have been accepted by the Iraqi authorities.

### **Unite Meeting 11 November**

Karen Johnson from Coalition to stop Deportation to Iraq was invited to speak about the plight of Iraqi asylum seekers and the UK Governments policy of forcible deportation to Iraq.

Please see below Karen speeches:

'The Federation did its best to address the problems facing Iraqi refugees'

**Karen Johnson speech in TGWU general**

**The right of Refugees to work and get support**