

## ***NO DEPORTATIONS TO IRAQ!***

The British government still intends to deport Iraqi and Kurdish nationals to whom it has refused protection. Fifteen people were forcibly removed on 20 November 2005. One person has been allowed back into Britain as the Home Office admit he should not have been on the flight. All were known to be frightened about their future when they returned, but it has not been possible to monitor their fate systematically.

The government estimates that it has removed approximately 1020 people in the 18 months to December 2005, either via International Organisation for Migration on so-called “voluntary” flights, or by people leaving under their own steam, sometimes after “enforcement action” had been initiated. Very many have only gone because they were made destitute and had lost all hope of getting protection here.

It should be obvious that Iraq is a dangerous country: its inhabitants are enduring the US/British occupation, the resistance to that occupation, rising sectarian strife, general lawlessness, daily kidnappings, abductions, and killings by death squads and suicide bombers. Power and water supplies and medical facilities still do not function properly, many people cannot get sufficient food or food that is fit to eat. The IMF is pressing for abolition of the basic food ration. Many places are catastrophically contaminated with uranium as a result of the last two wars.

Kurdistan (Northern Iraq), to which people are now being returned, is still part of Iraq and, although not suffering full scale open warfare like much of Iraq, is by no means exempt from the other problems listed here. In addition it is littered with mines that still kill and injure people, it is still politically dangerous for people who originally left because of persecution by Kurdish parties or Islamist groups, and it still has large numbers of displaced persons who do not have permanent homes or jobs or decent living conditions.

Amnesty International and other human rights organisations have opposed forced returns to Iraq. In August 2005 a UN report stated that credible evidence pointed to the systematic practice of torture in police stations and other Interior Ministry premises throughout Iraq. Scandinavian governments have decided against forcibly returning people to Iraq for the time being and have in some cases granted protection to Iraqi nationals to whom they had not previously done so.

In the light of all the above we call on the British government to:

- Stop deportations to Iraq
- Grant protection to all Iraqi asylum seekers 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 few Iraqi asylum seekers held in detention

We intend to continue to campaign as a broad **Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq** as agreed at the public meeting held in Parliament on 11 January 2006 and we invite other organisations and individuals who agree with the above statement to join us in this work.

**Jeremy Corbyn MP, John McDonnell MP, Jean Lambert MEP, International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, Asylum Rights Campaign, Campaign Against Criminalising Communities, Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF), Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers (CDAS), Iraqi Freedom Congress, Halkevi Kurdish-Turkish Community Centre, Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, International Organisation of Iranian Refugees, National Coalition of**

**Anti-Deportation Campaigns, Federation of Iraqi Refugees (Manchester), Federation of Iraqi Refugees (Nottingham), Peace in Kurdistan Campaign, Stop Deporting Children, Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organization, The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, Liberation, Maggie Bowden, Shapol Said (Wolverhampton Kurdish Community Association), Shano Kurdish Arts Project, George Binette (CDAS, personal capacity), Pauline Bradley (Iraq Union Solidarity), Sheila Biddlecombe, Ishtiyah Shukri, No Sweat, Alan Simpson MP, Referendum Congress for Independent Kurdistan, Falah Alwan Federation of Worker Councils and Union in Iraq(FWCUI), Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project (RASAP) in Leicester, Kamil Ahmed (Iraqi Kurdish Asylum Seeker and Refugees Organisation in Norway), Churches' Commission for Racial Justice, Dr Caroline Lucas MEP, Selda Aktas, Workers' Liberty**

(The above is an updated third version of the original statement, and includes original campaign supporters and recent additions to the list of signatories).

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For more information or to be listed as a campaign supporter contact:

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#### **NEXT MEETING**

Next campaign meeting will be at 7pm on Monday 27 March. The venue is Committee Room 2 at Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, which has kindly been booked by Camden Unison in line with its policy of support for asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. All welcome.

#### **DONATIONS**

Donations for the campaign would be very much appreciated. Please make cheques payable to Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers, mark them "Iraq", and send to BM Box 4289, London WC1N 3XX.