

UK Immigration policy is fatal

Deaths relating to removal / deportation since 2000 include ...

- A Ukrainian immigration detainee at Harmondsworth Removal Centre was found hanged 19th July 2004. Reports said he had received bad news from his solicitor.
- A Vietnamese immigration detainee was found hanged at Dungavel Removal Centre on 23rd July 2004. A fellow Dungavel detainee is reported to have said that the Vietnamese man had been detained for over a year and simply gave up hope of being released. Another said : 'Everyone is very angry and very upset. Nobody would listen to him [the man who died]. He spent a long time in jail in his own country and was afraid to go back"
- Zekria Ghulm Salem, trainee dentist, was found dead after authorities left him with no money to buy food. His emaciated body was found hanging from a makeshift noose behind a door in his flat.
- Esrafil Tajaroghi, an Iranian asylum seeker who had been made destitute and homeless, set fire to himself in the offices of Refugee Action rather than return to the death penalty he claimed he could be subjected to as a result of his challenge to the Basij, Iran's "morality police", and their discovery of his homo sexuality. He died a few days later.
- Glynnis Cowley, a South African mother of three, committed suicide after her asylum claim was rejected.
- Saeed Alaei, an Iranian, was found hanged after the rejection of his asylum claim. Shokrolah 'Ramin' Khaleghi, an Iranian claimed he had been a political prisoner in Iran. He committed suicide a week after his asylum claim was refused
- An unnamed Kosovan was discovered on a ferry travelling from Ostend to Dover. At Dover he was put back on a ferry to deport him to Calais. He jumped to his death.
- Nasser Ahmed, an Eritrean asylum seeker was found hanged shortly after being refused leave to remain.
- Souleyman Diallo jumped 100 feet to his death from a bridge - he was to be removed back to Guinea.
- Mohsen Amri, an Iranian, took his own life at his home - his asylum application had been refused on a technicality.
- Shiraz Pir, an Afghan, was found hanged, but still alive. He died five days later. His application for refugee status had been refused.
- Iranian Sirous Khajeh was found hanged at his home after mistakenly being told his asylum claim had been refused. A coroner criticised the Home Office's handling of the man's asylum claim.
- Tema Kombe, a Ugandan asylum seeker was found hanged in the toilet of a psychiatric ward of a hospital.
- Mohammed bin Duhri, a Palestinian asylum seeker, was found hanged at Belmarsh maximum security prison. Three prison officers were suspended after they allegedly filed reports saying he was alive and well when he was already dead.
- (Data kindly supplied by Institute of Race Relations)

To support the Naseh Ghafor Campaign, please Contact Sheffield Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers – 07787 146690

This briefing has been prepared by the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns North West England Region - 0161 740 6504 / ncadc-north-west@ncadc.org.uk



No More Deaths !

Briefing Notes for Naseh Ghafor Public Meeting
Naseh's family wiped out in northern Iraq. Naseh says he is the son of a Kurdish farmer from northern Iraq. Naseh worked as a shepherd. During the process of "Arabization", Naseh says his father was killed and his Mother and two sisters disappeared – like hundreds of thousands of others who disappeared, they are presumed dead. Terrified, Naseh fled.

The crisis of displacement and conflict in northern Iraq "is potentially one of massive proportions" say Human Rights Watch and "could soon explode into open violence". The Australian describe the regions as "a simmering armed camp, with the Kurdish military policing the lion's share of town, while other ethnic groups maintain their own enclaves. Roadblocks are everywhere, while at the heart of Kirkuk lies a large US air base.The city is shelled and mortared every night. Explosions light up the sky - but no one knows precisely who's behind the violence.

Against the recommendation of UNHCR to give all Iraqi asylum seekers some form of official protection, Naseh's claim has been refused - his life is filled with fear. Naseh says he is deeply traumatised by the killing of his father and disappearance of his Mother and two sisters. He is terrified to be returned to what is similar to the situation he fled – daily conflicts, insecurity, no protection, no control. Returning Naseh would retraumatise him and exacerbate his acute mental distress. The current UK Immigration policy is not to remove "failed" asylum seekers to Iraq at the moment, but this policy could change anytime – Naseh is in "limbo" and continues to live in fear.

"Failed" asylum seekers in "limbo" are criminalised

– Naseh has been evicted from his NASS accommodation, his financial support cut, and has no right to work – he is destitute and homeless, and subject to removal – this is a form of criminalisation. He could get accommodation and support back if he signs a clause that obliges him to co-operate with removal directions once set – like many, Naseh cannot bring himself "to sign his own deportation order".

Confused and frightened, Naseh stitched up his lips.

Confused and frightened by a situation whereby he could be sent back to Iraq anytime, Naseh sewed his lips up and has been on hunger-strike since the 8th July.

We demand the UK government ...

- ➔ **Comply with UNHCR – grant all Iraqi asylum seekers some form of official protection !**
- ➔ **Stop the criminalisation of asylum seekers !**
- ➔ **Give asylum seekers the right to work !**



History of ethnic cleansing and genocide in northern Iraq

A process of "Arabisation" of northern Iraq was conducted by successive Iraqi governments over several decades - hundreds of thousands of Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians were displaced from their homes and replaced with Arab settlers in what some describe as an ethnic cleansing campaign.

In 1988, the Iraqi government's brutal Anfal campaign entailed the bombing of entire villages and use of chemical weapons against civilians. Kurdish communities were decimated. The Anfal campaign's aim was not Arabization - it was genocide - Kurds were not allowed to return to their destroyed villages without assistance.

The impact of three decades of forced displacement and Arabization has been immense. U.N.-Habitat counted a total of 805,505 displaced persons living in the Kurdish governorates of Arbil, Duhok, and Sulaimaniyya in 2001.

The crisis of displacement and conflicting in northern Iraq

With the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein in April 2003, thousands of internally displaced people who have returned to the northern city of Kirkuk and other Arabized regions to reclaim their homes and lands, are living in desperate conditions - many are simply too poor to rebuild their homes or even pay for the trip to their villages. The Australian reported that "they are among the last victims of Saddam Hussein; it is their bizarre fate to be homeless on return to the city where they were born, and once lived"

Many so-called Arabization Arabs fled their homes during the U.S.-led invasion or were forced to do so subsequently, leaving them homeless often after living for decades in the Arabized villages - they turn, have become the latest victims of internal displacement. But in most cities, like Kirkuk, many Arab settlers chose to remain, explaining they had property deeds to their homes.

The Australian reported that the great majority of the displaced people returning come from Kirkuk itself, and still have the keys to their own houses, which now lie in Arab-held no-go areas.



The crisis is potentially one of massive proportions

Ethnic tensions between returning Kurds and others, and the Arab settlers escalated rapidly and have continued to do so, along with tensions between the different returning communities. Human Rights Watch say "the crisis is potentially one of massive proportions, and can only be resolved through resolute action by the international community", "the

population face precarious security conditions" and that "rising tensions between returning Kurds and Arab settlers could soon explode into open violence". The UNHCR describe a "climate of instability" and that "security incidents ... a continue with alarming frequency"



Human Rights Watch said: "One small local dispute could spark a chain of events that could lead to bloodshed." She blamed the coalition authorities for failing to address "a foreseeable problem". The Australian describe the regions as "a simmering armed camp, with the Kurdish military policing the lion's share of town, while other ethnic groups maintain their own enclaves. Roadblocks are everywhere, while at the heart of Kirkuk lies a large US air base.The city is shelled and mortared every night. Explosions light up the sky - but no one knows precisely who's behind the violence.

UNHCR urges ban on returns to Iraq and that all Iraqi asylum seekers be given some official protection

The Iraq government has specifically requested that UNHCR urge host countries not to encourage or force refugees to return. UNHCR is requesting a continued ban on forced returns - including rejected cases - to all parts of Iraq until further notice and is also recommending that all Iraqi asylum seekers continue to be granted some form of temporary protection.

After it's headquarters were bombed last year, UNHCR has withdrawn its permanent presence in Iraq - it stresses that, with no international staff inside the country, they are not in a position to monitor returnees, nor to provide them with any assistance once they are inside Iraq. UNHCR has, therefore, requested governments not to adopt any measures which are intended to encourage voluntary returns, including of rejected cases.

UNHCR has asked governments in the processing of asylum claims by Iraqis to take into consideration compelling reasons for non-return arising out of past persecution, as well as current international protection needs, including in particular persecution by non-state agents.

last month 2 asylum seekers killed themselves in UK detention centres - why ?

Having no official protection means Naseh's life is filled with fear

Naseh says he is deeply traumatised by the killing of his father and disappearance of his Mother and two sisters. He is terrified to be returned to what is similar to the situation he fled – daily conflicts, insecurity, no protection, no control. Returning Naseh would retraumatise him and exacerbate his acute mental distress.

In response to Naseh's situation, Sherman Carroll of the Medical Foundation For The Care of Victims of Torture said "The Medical Foundation draws attention to the "more general humanitarian principle" enunciated in UNHCR Handbook, paragraph 136, which states "it is frequently recognised that a person who – or whose family – has suffered under atrocious forms of persecution should not be expected to repatriate. Even though there may have been a change of regime in his country, this may not always produce a complete change in the attitude of the population, nor, in view of his past experiences, in [his] mind."

Naseh's asylum claim has been refused

No security, left "in limbo" - homeless and destitute with no right to work or claim benefits

- Asylum being refused and not being given any form of official "protection" means Naseh is subject to removal from the UK at any time.
- Asylum seekers are not allowed to work. They may be entitled to financial support (£30.84 a week for Naseh's age-group) and accommodation.
- "Failed" asylum seekers are not entitled to work and may have financial / housing support withdrawn, which has happened to Naseh.
- The Home Office are not returning any "failed" asylum seekers to Iraq at the moment, but this policy could change overnight – "failed" asylum seekers have no security at all and say they cannot feel safe.
- "Failed" asylum seekers may apply for "hard case support" which means signing a clause that obliges them to co-operate with removal directions once set – like many, Naseh cannot bring himself "to sign his own deportation order"
- For the many who cannot bring themselves to sign that clause, the state makes them destitute and homeless with no right to work – other than turning to crime, there may be no way to survive on the streets.



Stop criminalising asylum seekers!

Confused and frightened, Naseh stitched up his lips

Confused and frightened by a situation whereby he could be sent back to Iraq anytime, Naseh sewed his lips up and has been on hunger-strike since the 8th July. Campaigners say Naseh thinks his drastic action would influence the Home Office. Doctors have said that Naseh could lose consciousness at any time. Naseh is refusing treatment. He is basically dying.

Campaigners have at all times desperately tried every possible means to persuade Naseh to end his hunger-strike, un-stitch his lips and accept medical treatment. Ruggie Johnson from the Monitoring Group North said "we have tried everything – it's not an easy task".

Sue Taylor of the Sheffield Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers explains how she believes Naseh feels: "Naseh is dying 'under duress' – he is stuck in a space of fear and no hope – family members were killed in Iraq and Naseh had no security there, and now he is given no security in the UK. He doesn't want to die, he didn't commit suicide. He wants to live but it seems he is prepared to die if he can't have a life without fear"

Naseh is lying on the floor of a friend's house, who campaigners say has similarly had his accommodation and financial support withdrawn and is facing eviction. Campaigners say that a representative of the accommodation provider company came into the house while doctors were trying to see Naseh and said that Naseh had to leave, even though he was too weak to walk and is now semi-conscious. They also say that after they complained, the company changed its position somewhat. However, campaigners say they were told by Naseh's friends that the company has since removed certain of Naseh's documents and possessions from the house to an unknown location.



give asylum seekers the right to work!

Is the Home Office playing a game of “smoke and mirrors” about Iraqi returns ?

The Home Office are quick to insist that they do not intend to remove Naseh, but slow to add the word “yet”.

Looking back at the Home Office’s changing policy on returns to Iraq, it’s not surprising the many people in Naseh’s position feel insecure and criminalised in this country.



The Observer reported that “Britain was the first country to say it would start forcibly removing Iraqis who had sought asylum while Saddam was still in power”. They also report that “Controversial plans by Britain to 'enforceably repatriate' hundreds of Iraqis who fled persecution by Saddam Hussein have been suspended following warnings that the policy could see people being sent back to their deaths”

The Home Office is not complying with UNHCR’s request that all Iraqi asylum seekers are given some form of temporary protection – Naseh and the many like him are not being given any form of official protection.

Des Browne, the Immigration Minister, said on the 14th July in response to a Parliamentary Question about “failed” Iraqi asylum seekers being left destitute and homeless ; “It is now possible for Iraqis, including Kurds, to return home voluntarily”. The Iraq government requests that countries do not encourage or force returns.

Many wonder what benefit it is to anyone to have Iraqi asylum seekers criminalised by virtue of the fact that they are homeless and destitute but denied the right to work. Naseh, and the many like him, does not want hand-outs, he just wants to know he is safe and to be able to support himself.

Asylum seekers see the Home Office removing people to war-torn places like Somalia and Sudan, so they have little faith when the Home Office says they won’t be returned “until it’s safe”. The prelude could be detention pending removal – last month saw two desperate asylum seekers committee suicide in UK Removal Centres.

In a 5th August letter to Sheffield Trades Council, Home Secretary David Blunkett has cynically blamed campaigners for Naseh’s hunger-strike, saying they are “dangerous and irresponsible”, that they “encourage” asylum seekers “to believe that they can simply over turn the process by self-mutilation”, and they act “in a way which is clearly against the interests of individual asylum seekers” .

Campaigners say they find this really distasteful as they have never encouraged Naseh to do what he did and have only ever endeavoured every inch of the way to get Naseh to end his hunger-strike and accept medical treatment. Naseh’s action is not “political” – it is an act of a terrified young man who is an asylum seeker – asylum seekers are used as a political pawn by many parts of the

comply with UNHCR - give all Iraqi asylum seekers status !

Petition on behalf of Naseh signed by the below and many more ...

- **Tony Benn** - Former Chesterfield MP
- **Mark Serwotka** - heads the PCS trade union nationally
- **Louise Christian** - civil rights lawyer
- **Michael Mansfield** - civil rights lawyer
- **Jeremy Corbyn MP**
- **Michael Rosen** - poet and broadcaster
- **Jeremy Hardy** - comedian
- **Sheffield Trades Union Council**
- **Unison trade union branch at the Northern General Hospital**
- **Abderazak Bougara from the Sheffield Muslim Association of Britain**
- **Abdul Shaif of the Sheffield Yemeni Community Association**
- **Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers**
- **Monitoring Group North**
- **National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns**

To add your organisation, please contact the Naseh Ghafor Campaign -

Sheffield Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers - info@sheffielddefend.org
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