



Open Borders for Iraqi Refugees and Asylum seekers

On 15 October 2002, the Islamic Republic of Iran's Ministry of Interior stated that in the event of a USA attack on Iraq, it is expected that up to 750 thousand Iraqi refugees/asylum seekers will enter Iran. Ahmad Hosseini, the responsible authority in the Ministry told reporters that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had planned for 150 thousand. Hosseini reiterated that the refugees/asylum seekers will be settled in 'Zero Boundary Camps' and not allowed into Iran. Those attempting to enter Iranian territory will be dealt with severely. 16 spots have

been taken into consideration to place the asylum seekers. The majority of these spots being considered are located in the Western regions. Zero Boundary Camps are deserted areas that are vacant of any inhabitants, and are located inside Iraqi territory. They are lacking basic sanitary and living standards. With winter approaching and the possibility of the USA's attacks on Iraq, these asylum seekers/refugees who escape towards Iran will be placed in these camps. While Bush's war threats against Iraq continue and there are daily reports of people fleeing and heading towards the

Iranian borders, the Islamic Republic of Iran is persistent in its inhuman policy of closed borders. As has become the international norm, the regime has announced that it will deal with those who enter 'illegally' as criminals. Simultaneously, the Islamic Republic of Iran has placed its military and security forces on the alert. By validating the Islamic regime's inhumane policy of closed borders under the pretext of 'mutual collaboration for a solution to the immigration problem', the UNHCR is once again a collaborator in implementing the regime's anti-refugee policies.

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) condemns the Islamic Republic of Iran's closed borders to fleeing Iraqis and the UNHCR's consent and agreement with the Islamic regime. The borders must be opened to Iraqi refugees/asylum seekers. Basic supplies and living conditions must be placed on alert to support those who flee. The IFIR reiterates its call for open borders for Iraqi refugees/asylum seekers and the recognition of the right to asylum of Iraqis both in the region and internationally.

Sit-in of asylum seekers in Essen ends successfully

A two-week sit-in and a 35 km rally that was organised in Essen by the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) - German Branch and the International Committee against Stoning ended successfully on 13 October 2002. The sit-in exposed the German government's racist policies vis-à-vis Iranian asylum seekers, condemned deportations and also the wheelings and dealings between the Islamic regime of Iran and the German government. The sit-in was able to secure gains for asylum seekers. In negotiations that took place

between IFIR-German Branch representatives and German government officials, the authorities agreed to review the pertaining closed cases who are at risk of deportation.

Most importantly, the sit-in galvanised the financial and moral support of the people of the area. In the post-September 11 climate, many were warmly receptive to our condemnation of the Islamic regime in Iran, political Islam and religious reaction.



Report on a Protest Experience in Germany

Nasrin Ramzanali



Every year, 50,000 asylum seekers are deported from Germany, i.e. 130 to 140 people a day. The border and security police deport asylum seekers using any means necessary; some have even

died as a result of the violence meted out by German police.

In light of the wave of deportations, the growth of state racism, and increasing threats against asylum seekers, the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) - German Branch organised a two week long sit-in with the assistance of the International Committee against Stoning in opposition to the German government's anti-asylum policies.

The sit-in began on 29 September, which is also

known as Refugee Day with a conference that included speeches from organisers and representatives of various organisations that supported the sit-in and its demands. Huge numbers of asylum seekers participated in this conference. On average, 40 to 50 asylum seekers participated in the sit-in on a daily basis. During the sit-in, numerous meetings and programs were planned.

On the second day of the sit-in, we erected tents in the city centre of Essen with placards and slogans against deportation, state racism, stoning, execution and the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result, we were able to draw the attention of large numbers of people. Our action and demands were well received by people who came over to our tables and read our materials and press releases. They were interested in knowing more about the political situation in Iran, stonings and executions. They condemned the German government for its increased economic and political relations with Iran and believed that asylum seekers should not be the victims of such wheelings and dealings.

On the third day of the sit-in, IFIR representatives met with the Internal Minister of Nord Rein Westphalen. The Minister agreed to review the closed cases of asylum

seekers in this region.

IFIR representatives also visited women facing deportation in the largest detention centre in the area in order to get their voices heard by people on the outside. Women asylum seekers from Islam-stricken societies are forced to sign forms and wear a veil to prepare their documentation for deportation.

During the sit-in, we also stood in front of the court and announced the numbers of stonings, executions, and arrests of the people in Iran. We then pointed out to the rightlessness of asylum seekers and stated that anyone who deems the Islamic Republic a safe country is an accomplice in their crimes. We also submitted documents of human rights violations to the head of the court. In another effort during this time to raise awareness, we organised a 35 km bike tour riding between the two cities of Dortmund and Bochum. People's participation and encouragement during the 35-kilometer bike tour was impressive. On the way we held various public meetings including one in the Bochum city centre.

Visiting the camps of asylum seekers and bearing witness

Mansoor Hekmat (1951-2002)



With the bloody suppression of the revolution in Iran and the imposition of an ultra-reactionary life on the people, tens of thousands of human beings, alone and without organisation, fled the Islamic Republic of Iran in search of security and tranquillity. Organising this

vast human mass around the most modern and humane advances of humanity, unconditionally defending their right to asylum, and creating an international organisation without taking into consideration people's nationality, religion, sex and or political affiliation became an immediate necessity. Creating the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) was Mansoor Hekmat's response to these conditions. As he said: 'Our entire life story is changing the lives of human beings.'

Stop Executions in Iran

In the past few weeks, tens of people have been publicly hanged or stoned to death by the Islamic regime in Iran; several of those executed were known political prisoners. Others are awaiting execution, including 19-year-old Salar Kerdari for activities against the regime, Ghader Makhmal for taking part in the recent prison protests in the city of Mahabad, and Saeed Maasoori for opposition to the regime.

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) unequivocally condemns the Islamic Republic of Iran and executions in all forms and calls on groups and individuals to exert pressure on the Islamic regime to stop the executions and stonings. We

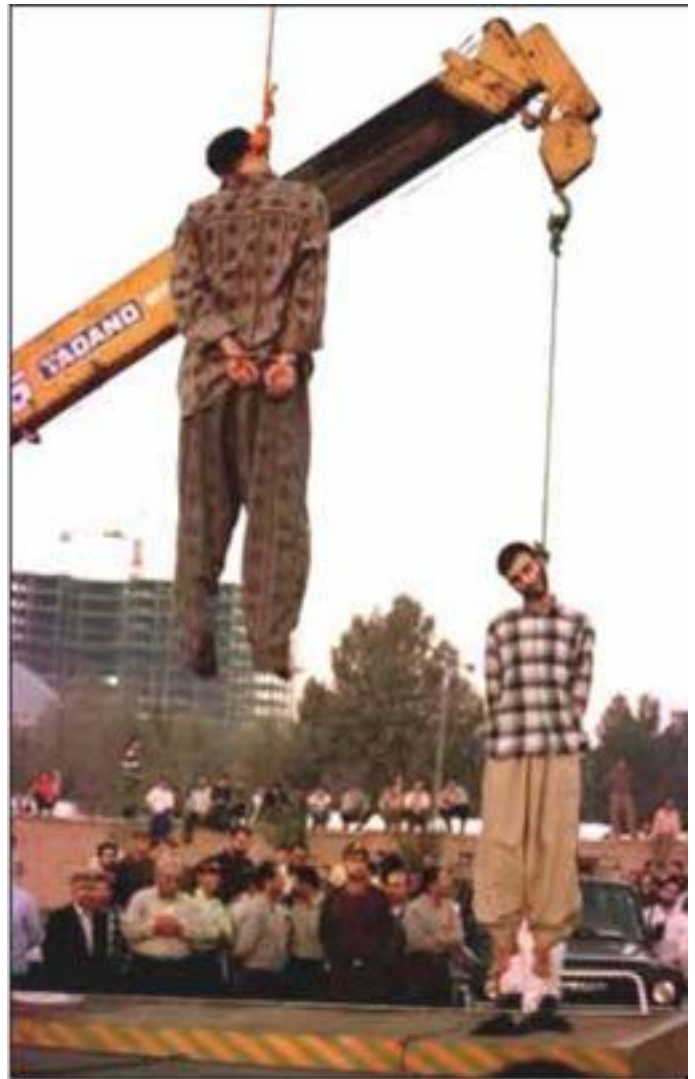
must not allow this regime to kill anymore human beings. International pressure can be instrumental in saving lives.

Send your letters of protest to:

Mohammad Khatami, E-mail: khatami@president.ir.
Address: The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

Sample letter:

I/My organisation strongly condemn(s) the Islamic Republic of Iran for its recent executions and stonings and demand(s) an immediate end to all forms of execution. Please send copies to ifir@ukonline.co.uk.



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to the abysmal situation was also another part of this two-week sit-in.

Twenty-five refugee rights organisations supported our sit-in both morally and financially. We continue to receive support letters from individuals and organisations even though the protest ended several days ago.

On the last day of the sit-in,

we marched between the cities of Bochum and Essen. This action caught the attention of many people and some joined the march that was about 36 kilometres long.

Local and national print media and television produced several reports on the sit-in. Through this sit-in and by exerting pressure on the media, they were forced to provide coverage on our

protest. Via the sit-in we were able to give a real image of the Islamic regime of Iran as well as the German government's racist policies. During this time we were greatly supported by the people. People embraced us, gave us flowers and pastries and stated that our presence is a necessary for society. In support of the asylum seekers' sit-in, the city theatre of Essen invited us to see a

play which was being performed. IFIR has time and again announced that only united and organised protest can secure our legitimate demands. IFIR's campaign against deportations will continue.

For more information, contact Nasrin Ramzanali, Director of IFIR German Branch Tel: +49 172 5350946, ifirgermany@web.de.

STOP DEPORTATIONS TO ISLAM-STRICKEN SOCIETIES

JOIN IFIR

* I wish to join the **International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR)** as:

__ Member (£25.00 p.a.)__ Affiliated Group (£100.00 p.a.)

* I wish to make a donation of: £__ I wish to subscribe to Hambastegi English or Iran Monitor: __ (£50.00 p.a.)

Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Address: _____

Please make cheques payable to the International Federation of Iranian Refugees and mail to P. O. Box 27236, London N11 2ZF.

* I wish to make a standing order:

To: The Manager of (your Bank) _____

(Address of your Bank) _____

Please pay the **International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR)** the sum of £_____ each month / quarter / year (delete as appropriate) until further notice and debit my Account no: _____ Sort Code: _____ starting on (date): _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

Signature: _____

[FOR OFFICE USE ONLY] To: **International Federation of Iranian Refugees**, Lloyds TSB bank plc. Sort Code: 30-99-86, account no. 0057223.

IFIR Country Directors

Australia: Arsalan Nazeri, Tel: +61 401005422, ifir@iprimus.com.au; **Azerbaijan:** Hassan Dadbar, Tel: +994503246259, ifirbaku@yahoo.com; **Belgium:** Hossein Pesh Ehsan, Tel: +32 478 904 163, ifirbe@hotmail.com; **Canada:** Siamak Amjadi, Siamak_Amjadi@Yahoo.Ca; **Denmark:** Mahmoud Gasvini, Tel: +45 2049 3098, nahid@mail.danbbs.dk; **England:** Saeed Arman, Tel: +44 7931866985, s.arman@ukonline.co.uk; **Finland:** Amir Tavakoli, Tel: +358 405821776, tavakoli@hotmail.com; **Germany:** Nasrin Ramzanali, Tel: +49 172 5350946, ifirgermany@web.de; **Greece:** Surush Naurasi, +31619766998, ifir@ukonline.co.uk; **India:** Abbas Rezaei and Ghafor Zareen, +31619766998, ifir@ukonline.co.uk; **Norway:** Ghafar Gholamveysi, Tel: +47 40851738, ghafar@chello.no; **Sweden:** Esmaeil Moloodi, Tel: +46 704920349, ifrs@hotmail.com; **Switzerland:** Mahmood Rahbary, Tel. +41 787957581, m_rahbary@hotmail.com; **Turkey:** Morad Shaikh, +31619766998, ifir@ukonline.co.uk; **United States:** Afsaneh Rahimi, Tel: +1 310413 1578, RahimiA2000@yahoo.com

IFIR Executive Committee

Maryam Namazie, **Executive Director**

Keyvan Javid, Deputy Executive Director

Siamak Amjadi, Rebwar Arif, Farshad Hoseini, Esmail Moloodi, Mehrnoush Moosavi, Ramin Niakan, Nasrin Ramzanali, Mohammad Shokohi

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www.hambastegi.org

Editor: Maryam Namazie

Translators: Nasser Asgary and Laili Panahi

E-mail: ifir@ukonline.co.uk

Tel: +44 7730 107 337; **Fax:** +44 8701351303

P.O. Box 27236, London N11 2ZF, England

www.hambastegi.org