

English Supplement

Al-Muntada

of the Iraqi Association

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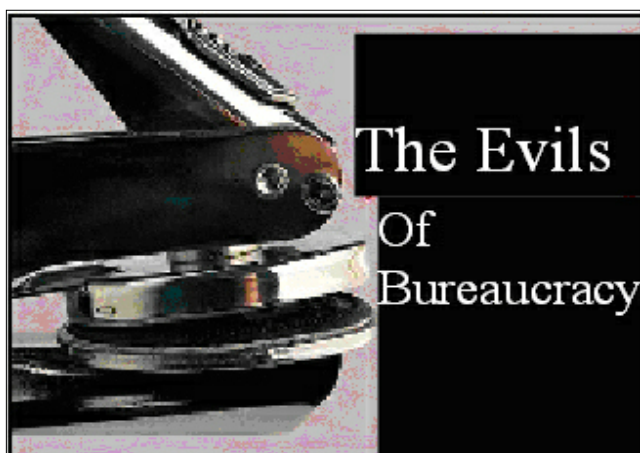
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June 2009

London Iraqi Consulate must work to prevent bureaucracy from impeding community engagement

Let's just run through this...

The epidemic of bureaucracy is becoming a painful and unstoppable disease which is not only hurting Iraqis here but it is alienating the community to return home and participate in the rebuilding process.



During the course of this year, we had many distressed and often traumatised clients with paperwork to be recognised and legalised by Iraqi consulate. It is extraordinary cases of people which tells a maze of red tapes, including vulnerable elderly exiles, single men, married couple, children and single women. They mainly seek:

- Legalising British birth and marriage certificates
- New Iraqi passport
- Iraqi pension papers clarification
- Power of Attorney Certificate (general and private)



Majority of Iraqis here are exiles, they sought safety in this country. They are either naturalised British Iraqi origin or have British Home Office permission to stay. However, because they originally fled Iraq; some don't have Iraqi original naturalisation papers, which the Consulate demands it. Some of them have changed their names because the fear of the previous regime. Others like Faily Kurds, who don't have Iraqi documents because of the previous regime's brutal denial, are all let down by Iraqi red tapes.

Its beggars believe that Consulate officials refuse to deal with those British-Iraqis who are unable to produce original Iraqi naturalisations, despite the fact that they have British passports and other British identifications to prove their Iraqi origin.

The fact is that since its departure three years ago, a new Iraqi Ambassador has not been appointed and the post has been vacant sine.

Iraqi community in Britain is the largest in Europe, they have suffered enough under the previous regime, and they don't deserve this type of degrading treatment now.

Annually, hundreds of Iraqis return home to deal with family and business affairs. It's a terrible state of affairs that Iraqi consulate are unable to deal with their legal paper work. For example, in May this year, Jamal, a British-Iraqi, wanted to legalise his children's British birth certificates, he was told that all his children and his wife must be present and must produce original Iraqi naturalisation certificates, they also must wait three weeks and to pay fees of £100. We had Eman 46; she is an Iraqi exile, who has a British Travel document issued by



the British Home Office, and an also has an Iraqi school personal identification. Eman visited the consulate to obtain a Power of Attorney Certificate; she was told that she cannot have it because she is unable to produce original Iraqi naturalisation...and many more similar cases.

Bureaucracy gone mad' no it shouldn't be. A fresh method can be considered with to deal with pressing issues of the community. We are aware that in Iraq nepotism and bureaucracy penalise people's aspiration, which often produces an illiterate system which leads to corrupt officials. One of our clients returned to Iraq to legalise his British marriage certificate, he was told that 'external marriages are not recognised in Iraq and you have broken the law and therefore you are liable to be arrested', his case was referred to the Minister of Justice for further consideration. What on earth is going on?

Why is bureaucracy an evil? Because it inevitably limits personal freedoms, and very often causes prolonged suffering on a large scale.

Democracy tries to uphold personal freedoms, bureaucracy will curtail it and produce more corruption. We hope to see an improvement in the Iraqi system here and home. When corruption is endemic the relationship between officials and citizens will become one of mutual contempt.

Denmark, Iraq Reach Deal on Repatriation

Denmark and Iraq have reached an agreement to repatriate Iraqi refugees whose asylum requests have been rejected. Danish Integration Minister Birthe Rønn Hornbech said that "We worked hard to reach this agreement". The deal, clinched after intense negotiations, was signed recently by Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari and the Danish ambassador in Baghdad, Bo Erik Weber. Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen hailed the deal which he said was "essential for the legitimacy of our entire asylum system." At the end of this March, Iraqis represented about 45 percent of

all rejected asylum seekers who were under expulsion order, according to a report by the Danish integration ministry. The Danish officials said that without an agreement with Baghdad, Denmark could not send the Iraqis back to the war-torn country due to fears for their safety.

Iraqi Refugees Seek Sanctuary in Denmark Church

Denmark authorities rejected calls to re-examine the cases of Iraqi asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected and who are staging a sit-in in a Copenhagen church. A group of 10 had first sought refuge in the Vor Frue Church in

Copenhagen to highlight their plight. The group quickly grew to almost 80 and a decision was made to move to the Norrebro Church where they are housed in basement rooms looked after by Danish volunteers. "One must not hope to win the right to stay through an occupation, because this would undermine our whole asylum system," Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, said. The protesters hope to achieve the same success as Palestinians who occupied a Copenhagen church in 1992 for several months and forced the government to pass a special law that granted asylum to the 460 Palestinian refugees



Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari

then in the country. This is the most recent example of European states forcefully deporting Iraqi asylum seekers.

Another Iraqi professor Assassinated

A female university professor has become the latest victim in a string of murders of intellectuals in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. The professor of law was assassinated in April in front of her home in the Al-Intissar district of western Mosul by unknown gunmen. The local police declined to give her name. The vicious cycle of violence against academics in Iraq is continuing, more than 200 academics were killed and hundreds went missing or were driven into exile, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report said. Last month, Ahmed Murad Shehab, a professor of Mosul University's Faculty of Administration and Economics, was fatally shot in the neighbourhood of al-Nur, on Mosul's left bank. Many others have stopped teaching and researching in order to protect themselves and their families.

U.N. Report Highlights Grim Picture

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) said in its latest report, issued April, that it "remains concerned about the overall human rights situation in Iraq since indiscriminate attacks remained a frequent occurrence; the targeted killings of security forces, high ranking officials and civil servants, religious and political leaders, professional groups such as journalists, educators, medical doctors, judges and lawyers and other civilians continued at a high rate, as did criminal abductions for ransom." It said the last half of 2008 "was also characterized by the attacks against minority leaders and the large displacement of over 12,000 Christians from Mosul in October.

Violence against women in the region of Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq remained one of the issues of serious concern as the pattern of the recorded incidents of suicide often points towards "honor"-related homicides." The U.N. report said the improvement in the security situation "was not accompanied by a full reestablishment of the rule of law and by systematically addressing impunity." "Allegations of torture should be promptly and thoroughly investigated, and criminal proceedings taken against officials found to have abused detainees in their custody. Every effort should be made to ensure that juvenile detainees are held at the appropriate and separate locations equipped with rehabilitation facilities, and additional resources devoted to address the issue of overcrowding at detention places," the report said. The U.N. report found that the 26,249 people being held in Iraq prisons in December faced "months or even years in overcrowded cells" and many had not been formally charged. It said the use of torture as an interrogation method and the ill-treatment of detainees remains "a serious challenge to Iraq's criminal justice system." The report also criticised jails in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region for poor treatment, including beatings and electric shock. Kurdistan also came under fire for its high rate of so-called "honour killings" of women and the many cases of women burned or coerced into suicide in these cases. It said, "The vast majority of women still face at least one form of domestic violence."

Immigration advisers to face tougher rules



Tougher rules to tackle rogue immigration advisers, including a "yellow card" warning system for firms that do not meet the requirements, was announced recently by the Home Office.

Ministers propose to give the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) greater powers to tackle unscrupulous and

unqualified advisers after receiving more than 3,500 individual complaints.

Under the proposals the commissioner, who regulates more than 1,600 immigration advice firms and 4,000 individuals, will be able to issue businesses with warnings to say that their practices are not up to scratch. The commissioner will also get the power to ban individuals who have given advice illegally in the past from owning or take part in an

immigration advice business. Suzanne McCarthy, the current commissioner, said that if the consultation proposal were implemented it would protect the immigration system from abuse. "Good immigration advice is in everyone's interest. Bad advice ruins lives," she said. The commissioner's office has successfully prosecuted 77 organisations and individuals and issued 67 formal cautions since it was set up in 2001.

Immigration Plans will hurt NHS



The British Medical Association said reform of the tier one skilled migrant category was unfair on foreign medics. Patient safety could be put at risk because changes to immigration rules could force hundreds of junior doctors out of the NHS, a union warns. The union said it meant doctors in the first two years of training would not be able to apply for the next stage. The BMA added that this could lead to a shortage of doctors eventually, compromising safety in the process. BMA chairman Dr Hamish Meldrum has now written to Health Secretary Alan Johnson urging him to intervene to protect the NHS workforce. He wants the Department of Health to take up the issue with the Home Office immediately as the NHS is also facing difficulties over the forthcoming introduction of the European working directive for junior doctors. Dr Meldrum said: "The full implementation of the directive coupled with a situation in which a proportion of prospective trainees can no longer continue with their training due to ever-tightening immigration rules is likely to exacerbate rota gaps, putting patient safety at risk."



ZIPANG Days Out

Next events: Saturday 6th June 2009 & Saturday 4th July 2009

In the morning you follow a Heritage Trail at the British Museum to find clues to a long-lost Sumerian story.

In the afternoon you listen to that story at the Poetry Café in Covent Garden. You can have a go at retelling the story with ZIPANG Mesopotamian storytellers Fran Hazelton and June Peters. Music will be provided by harpist Tara Jaff. Poetry from Nineb Lamassu

Places on this ZIPANG day out are free but numbers are limited and participants must register. To reserve a place and register in advance email registrations@zipang.org.uk You can also register on the day.

Meet the ZIPANG team any time between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. beside the Information Desk in the Great Court of the British Museum. Collect your Heritage Trail and start your hunt for story clues with guides who speak Arabic and English available to help you.

After you hand in your completed Heritage Trail to the ZIPANG team by 1.30 p.m. you can enjoy your own picnic lunch in one of the lovely Bloomsbury gardens, visit an historic pub or eat in one of the many local cafés. Gather from

3 p.m. at the Poetry Café, 22 Betterton Street, Covent Garden for the storytelling performance and workshop from 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.



Reach out and help an Iraqi Child.



£10 will feed an orphaned child for a week.

You can donate online using our secure website:
www.iraqiassociation.org or post to:
IraqChild, Freepost 21599, London W6 9BR.

Name _____

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Telephone _____

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Charity No. 1101109

Our Charity's Recent Activities

During the course of the last three months, Iraqi Association has organised and offered the following activities and services:

1. Organising women community activities to celebrate the International Women's Day, 8th March. More than 200 people attended including families and children.
2. Organised a community evening on 25 April for 3 Iraqi University Academics, 85 people attended.
3. More than 50 people attended a seminar on 12 May on the latest development on asylum and refugee issues in the U.K
4. A memorial evening was organised

on 18 April for the Iraqi artists.

5. Organised a community event on International Children's Day on 31 April.

6. Organising a play for the famous Iraqi actress and actor Nahida Al Ramah and Sami Kaftan on 5 & 6 June.

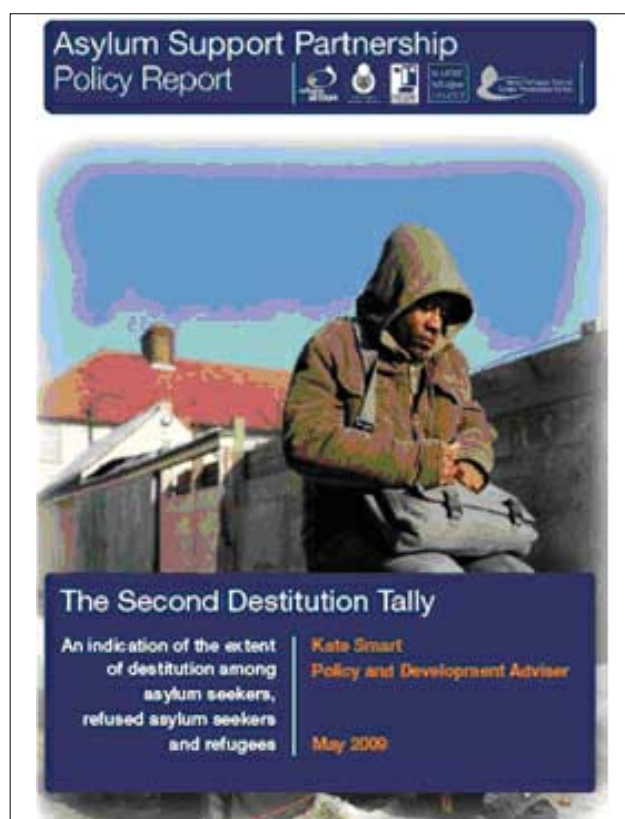
7. Twelve active volunteers were engaged with our work and activities during the last three months.

As a client-led charity, we have been serving people every day using different methods, including face to face, telephone and letters, the last three months we dealt with more than 430 cases in areas of housing, immigration, volunteerism, employment, education, training and family reunion. Our Al Rfidayn Health Trainer Project is

playing an active role. The project aims to focus and prioritise health issues related to diabetes, cardiovascular & heart problems, obesity, healthy eating & diet, elderly and age related concerns, cancer awareness and people been affected by, the service also includes, smoking, drugs & alcohol abuse within the community locally. This project is benefiting our users and adds value locally. For example, a local client who lost his full time employment due to an injury and left him immobilised with very limited movement. His health, housing condition, and mental status are disturbed; he lives on 3d floor with over 28 steps to get into his shared privately rented accommodation. We helped this person by providing adequate support in areas of occupational services, housing option team, hospitalisation and liaison with his GP. At the end we managed to

find him a secure accommodation, to avoid homelessness and sleeping rough on streets. This project is offering one to one session to our clients and service users in our office in Hammersmith, and also offers out-reach service to vulnerable and disable people locally. Furthermore, we are very pleased that recently we have developed a project, with the support of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, to serve young Iraqis including asylum seekers and refugees. This project, during its lifetime of two years, aims to settle young refugees and asylum seekers age range (16-21) through the process of direct support and advocacy work to improve their living conditions in this country. We have recruited a part-time worker to deliver the services, for more information please contact Iraqi Association.

Survey on destitution of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK



In May, the Asylum Support Partnership, published a report examining the extent of destitution among asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and refugees. The report "The Second Destitution Tally" reveals that almost half (48%) of visits to refugee charities are from destitute people. Destitution is more common among refused asylum seekers. Most of those recorded as destitute come from a very small number of countries, such as Iraq, Iran, Zimbabwe, and Eritrea, where there are well-documented human rights abuses and persecution. The report suggests that people will remain destitute in the UK for long periods if they do not believe it is safe to return, and that destitution could be more than halved if solutions were found for asylum seekers from these countries, including recognition of the problems of return, and granting leave to stay in the UK.



University Scholarships Agreed

In London, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki unveiled a raft of initiatives recently, to strengthen ties with the UK higher education sector, while in Basra, British forces withdraw. As British military operations in Iraq drew to a close, Iraq's Prime Minister was in London in May to announce a series of initiatives to strengthen links between universities in the two countries. He announced details of the pilot of a new scholarship scheme that will see 300 Iraqi students attend UK universities in 2009, with the aim of increasing the total number of scholarship students studying overseas to 10,000 in time.

In addition, the British Government announced measures to ease visa restrictions on Iraqi students, as well as £3 million from the Department for International Development to fund partnership and twinning programmes between universities in the two countries. The Iraqi-financed scholarship scheme has been set up as part of Iraqi government education initiative launched earlier this year. A statement from the British Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills stressed the need for Iraq, like other countries, to "ensure that education systems meet the changing needs of a global economy and are aligned with the needs of employers, business and industry". "As for vocational education, we recognise the importance that this sector can play in the rebuilding of Iraq," it said.

Voluntary Return Project for Rejected Asylum Families

A new project is set up in June to encourage rejected asylum seeker families in Glasgow to return voluntarily to their home country. This is a partnership between Glasgow City Council, the UK Border Agency and the Scottish Government. Its aim is to reduce the need for the detention and enforced return of those families who the UK Border Agency and the courts agree do not require international protection. Phil Taylor, regional director of the UK Border Agency in Scotland and Northern Ireland, said: "We only detain families as a last resort when they refuse to return home, despite the courts confirming that they do not require protection. This project is a small step along the way, and it is likely that some families who fail to return home voluntarily will still have to be detained and their departure enforced. However, we are all committed to making that number as small as we possibly can and if we can eliminate the need to enforce family removals, so much the better."



The Latest Campaign of Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)



Members of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) have launched a campaign to prohibit the employment of members of racist organisations within the Home Office and UK Border Agency.

PCS's members believe that it is unacceptable for members of racist organisations to implement asylum and immigration policy, as their political beliefs are incompatible

with performing the duties of sensitive roles such as border officers, enforcement officers and asylum caseworkers properly. The Prison and Police Services introduced a ban on the employment of British National Party, National Front and Combat 18 members and now members of the PCS union are petitioning for similar employment restrictions in Home Office departments. To sign the petition please login <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/racistorgban/#detail>