



Two saved from deportation from Canada to Iran

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) - Vancouver Branch held a press conference to discuss issues concerning asylum seekers and refugees on January 23 at 4:00pm at the Coast Plaza Hotel, 1763 Comox St at Denman in downtown Vancouver. The IFIR and the Campaign to Stop Deportations, which was launched in October 2002, are jointly working on ensuring that Iran is added to the Canadian government's list of unsafe countries, as it has been in the past, and to put a stop to deportations to Iran.

Iran is not a safe country. Public executions, use of torture, flogging, amputations, and stoning to death are exercised repeatedly.

Canadian Immigration forces asylum claimants to complete temporary travel document forms provided by the Islamic Republic Embassy in Canada. Immigration officers force Iranian refugees to provide personal information to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the same repressive government that these refugees have fled from. This results in the deportee's arrest, imprisonment, torture, and even execution upon their return as it has in the past. Iran is simply not a safe country.

On Jan. 17, we received the disturbing report of the arrest of two Iranian refugees, Mrs. Nateghi and her son Mr. Esmat. They were called to Immigration for an interview at 10:00am and by 10:25 they

had called their employer to inform him that they have been handcuffed at the Immigration office and were being moved to a prison. Mrs. Nateghi was taken to the Burnaby Women's Correction Centre and Mr. Esmat was sent to a prison at 222 Main Street. They were both initially denied visitors as well as a lawyer.

The IFIR-Vancouver and the Campaign started a protest letter writing campaign to many government officials including the Minister of Immigration, the UNHCR, and MPs. We also sent e-mails and faxes to both Iranian and Canadian media.

On Jan. 20, we arranged a demonstration in front of Immigration; representatives

of IFIR-Vancouver, the Campaign and a group of refugees requested a meeting with Mr. Rob Johnston, Director of Enforcement to demand that the deportation be stopped. Despite all our efforts, Mr. Johnston refused our request. All the demonstrators decided to stay and continue their protest until midnight. While in front of the Immigration, many Canadians and passer-bys joined and offered their support that night and promised to continue their support the next day at the airport by coming to our next planned protest.

Since the day of deportation was announced, Tuesday Jan. 21, we planned to have a

continued page 2

Nothing is sacred but the human being Refugee women: victims of the New World Order

Maryam Namazie

A conference entitled 'In Commemoration of Fadima Sahindal: Honour killings and oppression of women: culture and politics or cultural politics' which was held during 17-19 January 2003 in Stockholm, Sweden ended in success. The three

day conference dealt in depth with critical issues such as honour killings, secularism, political Islam and women's and refugee women's rights. Speakers included Azar Majedi, Taslima Nasrin, Göran Greider, Sarah Mohamad, Parvin Kaboli, Nasek Ahmad, Maryam Namazie, Azam Kamguyan, Aida Soleyman Touma, Halaleh

Taheri and many others. Hundreds attended the three-day session, including governmental and non-government representatives. Maryam Namazie's speech given at the conference follows.

A summary glance at the

continued page 2



Two saved from deportation, from page 1

protest at the airport in front of the gates to raise public awareness with the hope of positively influencing their fate. The members of IFIR Vancouver, the Campaign, and individual supporters arrived at the airport and were trying to get information of the flight when suddenly a friend of Mrs. Nateghi recognized her walking handcuffed, and in the custody of an immigration officer. Her friend screamed

her name and in a matter of seconds, everybody surrounded her, trying to protect her from being taken away.

In the confusion, Mrs. Nateghi started to run for her life and managed to escape. Since this incident, Mrs. Nateghi has turned herself over to the authorities and is again in custody. She is neither a criminal nor a lawbreaker, and what

happened to her can easily happen to anybody who feels his/her life is in danger.

IFIR Vancouver and the Campaign will continue their work towards impelling the Government of Canada to acknowledge Iran as an unsafe country and to stop its deportation of Iranian refugees.

We once again call on all progressive individuals and

organisations to join our protest and support the Campaign Against Deportations. Stopping deportation and mistreatment of refugees is a victory for all freedom loving people. Telephone Rob Johnson at Immigration Canada at 604-666-5946, and/or email the Minister of Immigration, Denis Coderre at minister@cic.gc.ca to demand they stop the deportations to Iran.

Nothing is sacred but the human being, from page 1

world reveals the intolerable situation of refugees and asylum seekers in general and women refugees and asylum seekers in particular. There has been an all-out war against asylum seekers not just since the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, though the assault was stepped up post 9/11. It all began at the end of the Cold War when Western governments no longer needed to portray themselves pro-human rights vis-à-vis the Eastern bloc. Since then asylum seekers have not only become 'illegal migrants' and 'criminals' but are now also deemed 'terrorists'. In this all-out war, women are one of the most

adversely affected, shut behind closed doors dying of the freezing cold, suffocating in containers, drowning in seas and languishing in abject poverty and misery. Most women can't even get to a safer place to apply for refugee status based on 'membership in a particular social group'. Routes to safety are either shut tight or shutting. This intolerable situation is also an aspect of the New World Order and the USA's attempts to establish a unipolar world and its complete hegemony and dominance. The September 11 tragedy and the subsequent war of terrorists have been the means to

intensify this attempt and establish naked barbarity in the world. In this era, anything is permissible. The USA government can round up all non-immigrant men and boys over 16 born in the Middle East and detain thousands. The EU can propose to make refugee status a temporary one. With the impending war on Iraq, Turkey can send in troops to Iraqi Kurdistan with the specific aim of stopping the refugee flow. Despite continued insecurity and misogyny in Afghanistan, all borders can be closed to those fleeing and EU governments, the UNHCR and border countries such as the Islamic regime in Iran can begin

deportations or so-called 'repatriations'.

Even in their so-called war against terrorism, they don't even feign to adhere or respect rights. Western governments have left the people of the region at the mercy of political Islam, which incidentally they helped strengthen and maintain. In fact, they have been stepping up the war on the people and women of the Middle East: they are stopping victims from reaching safety while colluding and supporting Islamic states and movements. They have established a Loya Jirga in

continued page 3



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.'

Nothing is sacred but the human being, from page 2

Afghanistan to ensure that women's rights do not go beyond the anti-woman and economic sanctions, closed borders and the denial of the right to asylum and fervour to be and only be anti-imperialist. It holds rallies with Islamists rather than supporting the source of their oppression and reason for flight and without



Islamic framework. In Iraq, they have gathered a bunch of misogynists and Islamic and other reactionaries to administer Iraq post Saddam Hussein. In Iran, the EU is pursuing a 'human rights dialogue' with one of the most oppressive states in human history. And when women flee and manage to reach a safer place to apply for asylum they say that 'the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution grants women equal rights' or that 'Article 21 guarantees women's rights in all respects' (reasons given in UK refusal).

Women and women asylum seekers are one of the first victims of this policy and practice. They are the victims of political Islam and Islamic terrorism, USA/NATO terrorism, including bombings

also cultural relativism. All standards, norms, rights are relative according to this racist notion. So Iranian prisons are 'satisfactory for third world standards' (according to the Dutch government) and peace in Afghanistan is satisfactory according to 'Afghan standards' (according to the Economist). This means that women can continue to be stoned, flogged, beheaded, veiled and mutilated under sexual apartheid in the Middle East and can continue to be segregated, veiled, killed in the name of honour and live under different standards and rights in the West itself resulting in the murders of the Pelas and Fadimas (killed in the name of honour in Sweden). The 'Left' too is not immune to this racism. It excuses political Islam in its

progressives and segregates men and women in anti-war meetings. It too leaves women at the mercy of Islamic states and movements.

One cannot claim to defend refugee women without defending open borders, an end to detention and deportation, and the right to asylum for all women fleeing political Islam. Political Islam is so misogynist, so deadly, and so inhuman that anyone who manages to flee it must be granted asylum. One could not only demand asylum for some Jews fleeing Nazi fascism. In the same way, one cannot demand asylum for only some women fleeing Islamic fascism. One cannot claim to defend women asylum seekers and refugees while remaining silent on or

unequivocally opposing political Islam. One can't claim to defend refugee women without supporting the movement for secularism and the overthrow of Islamic states like the Islamic regime in Iran by the people or supporting secularism and equal rights for women in the Middle East as well as those living in the West.

Before anything, we must begin with the fundamental premise that nothing is sacred but the human being. We must begin with women and their universal rights in order to defend women living in Islam-stricken societies and communities, in order to prevent anymore Pelas and Fadimas, and defend refugee women's rights. This of course is our task.

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.

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