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## About the PMOI and Iranian refugees in Iraq

Maryam Namazie's Open Letter to Mr. Ruud Lubbers, UNHCR

April 18, 2003

Mr. Ruud Lubbers  
United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees  
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Lubbers:

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) is extremely concerned about the perilous situation of the membership and leadership of the People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran (PMOI) in Iraq.

Following the bombardment of the PMOI bases in Iraq by USA forces - with the full knowledge of the Islamic regime of Iran - fleeing PMOI members seeking protection have been denied entry into Jordan. According to news reports, more than 70 members of the PMOI have been stuck in no man's

land two kilometres from Jordan's Al-Karama border post with Iraq. Many of them are reported to have refugee status from various countries already. Jordan is waiting for a commitment by the Islamic regime of Iran or the countries that have granted refugee status to some of *continued page 2*

## IFIR Emergency Unit on Iraqi Refugees

**Farshad Hoseini**

The IFIR Emergency Unit on Iraqi Refugees headed by Farshad Hoseini has issued 26 press releases to date.

Here is a summary of the latest press releases:

\* PR 26, Thousands of Iraqi refugees will be deported from Australia and

*cont page 3*



## Sirvan Ghaderi's life saved

On 11 April 2003 at 10am, Sirvan Ghaderi, a political activist who fled Iran because of persecution at the hands of the Islamic regime of Iran and a member of IFIR-Turkey, was detained by the Turkish police in the city of Ankara. The authorities planned to deport him by early afternoon. Though he had been interviewed by the UNHCR, he had not received any response. The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) began an

immediate campaign on his behalf demanding that Sirvan Ghaderi be granted refugee status, his deportation order be cancelled and that he be immediately released. At first his deportation was delayed until the following Monday. After ongoing pressure exerted on the UNHCR via our branch in Turkey as well as internationally, Sirvan was granted refugee recognition and his deportation to Iran cancelled.

## About the PMOI and Iranian refugees in Iraq, from page 1

them that they will take the necessary measures to 'repatriate' them, before allowing them into the country. According to Jordan, third country refugees must be repatriated to their host country or their country of origin in line with mutual agreements reached. IFIR urges the UNHCR to immediately intervene so that the refugees and asylum seekers are permitted entry and granted protection and that non-refoulement is ensured. Furthermore, IFIR calls on the UNHCR to ensure that the PMOI leadership is not extradited to Iran as requested by the Islamic regime of Iran. Clearly, any form of extradition, return or refoulement will place their lives and safety under serious threat. The UNHCR is duty-bound to guarantee their safety and protection. The PMOI is a political opposition

group and its members and leadership will face capital punishment, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment should they be refouled to Iran.

IFIR is also concerned about a group of 114 Iranian refugees who have fled from Al-Tash refugee camp in Iraq due to insecurity to the Jordanian border. Al-Tash is 120 kilometres west of Baghdad and holds more than 14,000 Iranian refugees. IFIR calls on the UNHCR to ensure that Jordan allow these 114 and any others who are forced to flee entry and protection from refoulement.

IFIR reiterates its demands as mentioned in our letter to you dated 31 March:

1. Stop the slaughter of the Iraqi people immediately.
2. Open all borders to Iraqi



refugees. Closing of borders by any government is a crime. No group or government can prevent the movement of refugees.

3. Recognise the right to asylum for all Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers.
4. Stop all deportations to Iraq and the region.
5. Provide necessary food, shelter, health care and sanitation to Iraqis, refugees and internally displaced via non-governmental agencies.

6. Transfer 100,000 refugees in Iraq, including Iranians, to safe places.

Your immediate intervention is requested.

Sincerely,

Maryam Namazie  
Executive Director

Cc. International human rights organisations

## Defend Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers

With the start of the USA-led war against Iraq on Thursday 20 March, we have been witnessing the unfolding of a human tragedy. Everyone knows that the first victims of this war are and will be the innocent people of Iraq. Many are becoming displaced and will be forced to flee. It is estimated that the war will result in one and a half to two million refugees and 3 million displaced persons. But where will they go to? Countries neighbouring Iraq, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, have closed their borders. Also Western countries with

the support of the UNHCR are freezing Iraqi asylum applications in order to facilitate deportations once the bombings have stopped. The UNHCR, which has the direct responsibility of protection and providing assistance, has not prepared itself for the unfolding disaster. Defending the lives and rights of those fleeing this war is the task of the anti-war movement and progressive people everywhere. The only hope of the people of Iraq and Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers is the worldwide

protest and the pressure exerted by millions. This force and movement must demand the following: 1. Stop the war and slaughter of the Iraqi people immediately. 2. Open all borders to Iraqi refugees. Closing of borders by any government is a crime. No group or government can prevent the movement of refugees. 3. Recognise the right to asylum for all Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers. 4. Stop all deportations to Iraq and the region. 5. Provide necessary food, shelter, health care and sanitation to

Iraqis, refugees and internally displaced via non-governmental agencies. 6. Transfer 100,000 refugees in Iraq, including Iranians, to safe places. The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) calls on groups and individuals to defend Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers and demand the above. IFIR has set up an Emergency Unit on Iraqi Refugees headed by Farshad Hoseini. For more information on the Unit, contact Farshad Hoseini, farshadhoseini@yahoo.com, +31 613940534.

## IFIR Emergency Unit on Iraqi Refugees, from page 1

Britain, 16 April 2003: The British and Australian government plan to forcibly deport Iraqi asylum seekers or 'repatriate' tens of thousands of refugees to Iraq. The Home Office plans to pay each 'repatriating' family 3000 pounds and forcibly deport all those who have been refused or awaiting a decision. They have stated that they will carry out the deportations via special flights as done to Afghan refugees and asylum seekers. Many of the Iraqi asylum seekers are Kurds; the Home Office has announced that Iraqi Kurdistan is safe for their return. Philip Ruddock, the Australian Immigration Minister has also announced that Australia will be 'repatriating' or deporting Iraqis - despite the fact that it is impossible to lead a basic and decent life in Iraq. After the attack of the USA and British forces, chaos, rightlessness, and insecurity have engulfed Iraq. Civil society has been torn apart. This was not unexpected. While the USA and Britain were bombing the Iraqi people, Ruud Lubbers, the head of the UNHCR, was calling for the freezing of all Iraqi asylum determinations!

It was clear that following a military victory, the wave of deportations of Iraqi asylum seekers would start. The UNHCR was merely paving the way for this. The International Federation of Iranian Refugees strongly condemns these inhuman policies of the British and Australian governments and calls on all progressive and humanitarian groups and individuals to intervene to prevent yet another human catastrophe for the people of Iraq.

\* PR 25, 170 thousand Iraqi children will die in the next year, 14 April 2003: The Daily Mirror reported that Britain has removed its desert clinic and British doctors from Iraq. In this report the International Red Cross has been quoted as saying that only two hospitals from 35 are operational. Thousands of wounded and sick are at risk of death without electricity and water. In another report from Greenpeace, 170 thousand Iraqi children will die as a result of the consequences of war and health hazards. The architects of the New World Order are not at all concerned about these children while

proclaiming concern for the oil wells and museums. While British and American wounded are immediately flown out to the best hospitals in the world, thousands of war wounded children have been left to die. All the war wounded, particularly all the children, must be immediately removed to proper hospitals and receive full care in countries outside of Iraq.

\* PR 24, Condemn Thousands of Iranian refugees must be immediately transferred from Iraq, 14 April 2003: According to the latest figures provided by international organisations, 23,700 Iranian refugees were in Iraq until the end of 2002. From these figures, 19,000 Iranian refugees were living in southern Iraq and 4,700 in Northern Iraq. In the Al-Tash camp in the West of Iraq (close to Baghdad) alone, there are 12,150 Iranian refugees. Up to now, the media has not provided any information on their safety and situation. A large majority of the refugees in Iraq are political opponents of the Islamic regime in Iran. Recent wheeling and dealings between the Islamic regime and the USA and British

government places these refugees at risk of being returned. IFIR calls on all groups and individuals to exert pressure to ensure that the refugees are moved to safety, granted protection and not deported to Iran.

\* PR 23, A hundred thousand Iraqi refugees are languishing behind closed Iranian borders, 12 April 2003: According to the Islamic regime in Iran, one hundred thousand Iraqi refugees are at the border town of Mehran outside the Iranian border. He asserted that the fact that no refugee has yet entered Iran is the result of the clever work of the Governate! According to the same report, thousands of refugees from Baghdad and southern Iraq are 17 kilometres from the Iranian border. The refugees do not have their basic needs met and while guarantees have been given and money paid to the Islamic regime by the UNHCR, they have done nothing to assist the Iraqi refugees. IFIR condemns the irresponsibility of the Islamic regime in Iran and calls on all to exert pressure on it to allow entry to Iraqi refugees and ensure that their basic needs are met.



### 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.'

# 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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