

## Abas Amini is granted leave to remain in the UK

All Iranian asylum seekers and those fleeing political Islam and repression must be granted protection



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An independent appeals tribunal rejected the UK Home Office's permission to appeal against Abas Amini's leave to remain in the UK. Yesterday afternoon, 28 May, Abas' solicitor was faxed with the Tribunal judge's decision not to allow the Home Office appeal against the Adjudicator to go ahead. The judge argued that there were no legal grounds for such an appeal, that Abas had been a credible witness at adjudication, with an account consistent with country reports on Iran and substantiated by medical evidence. The judge said that Abas had been able to answer the objections raised by the Home Office in their initial refusal of asylum. Last night, the Home Office said it had accepted the ruling by the tribunal confirming that Abas Amini had been granted asylum. Therefore, Amini will be allowed to stay. Yet Amini who has stitched his lips, ears and eyes will nonetheless continue his hunger strike to raise the wider issue of unfair determination procedures, the right to asylum and protection from deportation of Iranians and all those fleeing repression and political Islam. His doctor says his kidneys will soon stop functioning and he will go into a coma; he nonetheless refuses medical intervention, food and water. This human tragedy unfolding

before our very eyes says much about an inhuman asylum policy that has driven Amini to stitch his eyes and lips together and want to take his own life. It says much about a policy that forces human beings like Amini, a young man of 33 who has struggled so long and hard against the Islamic Republic of Iran, survived torture, mock executions and years of imprisonment, flight and separation from his spouse and children to take such desperate measures. During his two year long application for asylum in the UK, he faced lengthy delays and adjournments; his application was adjourned five times before the tribunal's hearing last month, three times because he was given the wrong translator. In this last instance, the Home Office had sought leave to appeal after it failed to send a representative to his successful hearing. Amini's case also reveals the misery and rightlessness of asylum seekers in the UK; he did not have access to proper medical care in Nottingham and at one stage was denied

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### **Abas Amini's brother holds the British government responsible for his Wellbeing**

Today, Abas Amini's brother, Eskandar Amini issued a statement to the press via the International Federation of Iranian Refugees. His statement is as follows:

'We hold the British government responsible for Abas Amini's welfare. His family and I are opposed to the manner in which the British government has treated Abas. We hold them responsible for his wellbeing and request that all those who defend civil and human rights to stand with him and show their support for Abas.'

'On behalf of the Amini family  
Eskandar Amini  
Marivan, Karabad, Iran  
9:55am  
May 29, 2003'

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benefits when he refused to move because of safety reasons. Amini's personal tale is truly a heart wrenching cry against and condemnation of the tragedy and rightlessness imposed on today's asylum seekers by the UK government. Amini's case is but one example of asylum procedures that aim to refuse, deny, detain and deport and build fortresses and closed borders rather than protect victims of persecution. Clearly, the UK government is responsible for Amini's despair and wellbeing. This unspeakable form of protest such as sewing of lips and eyes is home-grown right here in the UK, Australia and the West; it a direct result of inhuman asylum policies and practices. Amini's call for improvements and fairness in asylum procedures must be raised by all who defend civil and people's rights.

Moreover, Amini's tale exposes the wheeling and dealings between the UK government and the repressive Islamic regime in Iran at the expense of countless victims of persecution. A look at UK government refusal letters of Iranian asylum seekers proves this clearly. The UK government's cultural relativism and racism justifies and ignores serious, systematic and gross violations of civil and human rights, legitimises repressive

laws, and rejects those fighting against them as lawbreakers. It denies people's rights to struggle for change, for an end to repression, and to exert their rights as human beings - and all this to promote economic and political ties with a repressive regime. And this too at a time when the people of Iran have come to the forefront to overthrow this regime and in defence of freedom and equality. While the Islamic regime of Iran's ambassador to Britain denies that Amini would be at risk if he were to be deported, everyone, including he himself, know better. There are countless examples of deported asylum seekers being imprisoned, disappeared, and executed. Moreover, this is a regime renown for hanging people from cranes in public, amputating limbs, gouging of eyes, forcibly veiling women, promoting sexual apartheid and denying even the most basic rights to strike, organisation, association and freedom of expression. Its laws allow for stoning to death of people who have been accused of adultery specifying even the size of the stone that must be used in the barbaric medieval punishment. No deported asylum seeker is safe in Iran. All those supporting civil and human rights must also raise Amini's banner calling for an end to deportations and the right to asylum of Iranians

and all those fleeing political Islam and repression. Living under sexual apartheid, Islamic laws and an Islamic regime or at the mercy of reactionary Islamic groups provides a well-founded fear of persecution for anyone who is unable or unwilling to live under such brutal conditions, just as all Jews had a right to protection from the Nazis (though at the time, many Western countries turned back fleeing refugees) or just as a black South Africans had the right to protection from racial apartheid.

While Amini's personal case unequivocally indicts British asylum policies and the Islamic regime in Iran, it also reveals much about humanity itself which despite the daily, constant barrage of racist scapegoating and the criminalisation of asylum seekers has come out in full force in defence of his life and dignity and his demands and that of all asylum seekers. 200 people joined a demonstration in front of Amini's house on Wednesday 28 May. He continues to receive messages of support and solidarity. People must continue coming out in support of Amini's life and demands and that of of so many nameless, faceless asylum seekers facing closed borders, fortresses, unfair



refusals, detentions, deportations and rightlessness. We can and must encourage Amini to live while we hold the UK government fully responsible for the life and wellbeing of Amini and all asylum seekers.

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) continues to call on Amini to cease his hunger strike. We have initiated an international campaign in his defence and for justice. We have assured him and all those concerned about his wellbeing that we will continue advocating for fair, unbiased asylum determination procedures in the UK and elsewhere, the right to asylum and not to be deported for all Iranian and other asylum seekers fleeing political Islam and repression and for universal rights and standards for Amini and all asylum seekers. We will also continue to demand an end to political relations with the Islamic regime of Iran and other repressive regimes.

But for now, Amini must live. If he dies, a part of civil society will die him.

**You can send letters of support to Amini via [ifir@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:ifir@ukonline.co.uk).**

# JOIN IFIR

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

**Send letters of  
protest to the UK  
Home Office and  
defend Abas Amini's  
demands**

Letters can be sent to: Home Secretary David Blunkett, Home Office, 50 Queen Annes Gate, London SW1H 9AT; Fax: +44 20 7273 4647; public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. Please send copies to ifir@ukonline.co.uk.

For more information on Abas Amini, contact Maryam Namazie, Executive Director, International Federation of Iranian Refugees at +44 (0) 7719166731; Sam Azad, IFIR Regional Organiser, Tel: +44 (0)7929917756 / +44 (0)7739378177; or Reza Moradi, director of the Federation in the UK at +44 (0)7730846433.

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# Amini raises demands to the Home Office

## Support his Demands!

A tribunal has refused the UK Secretary of State permission to appeal against a court decision to grant indefinite leave to remain for Abbas Amini.

Mr. Amini, an asylum seeker from Iran, began a hunger strike and stitched up his ears, eyes and lips to protest against the way he and other asylum seekers have been treated by the British government. He has not eaten since last Wednesday, and not had water or any other fluid since last Thursday.

Mr Amini is continuing with his protest because, as he has said from the beginning, he is protesting on behalf of all asylum seekers, regardless of where they are from. He is making four requests of the Home Office before he is prepared to take some water:

1. The Home Office must review its asylum procedures regarding refusals and appeals, and review its policy that challenges decisions granting asylum seekers the right to remain in the UK, regardless of their background or previous circumstances.
2. The Home Office must become more open with solicitors representing asylum seekers on how refusal decisions are made.
3. The Home Office must ensure that its staff's attitude towards ALL asylum seekers is to treat them with respect

and humanity.

4. Mr Amini's main concern is for other asylum seekers who have been refused the right to remain in the UK and are facing removal. He says that these people should not be removed - especially to countries like Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan which have had no human rights for decades. He is asking the government to recognise any countries that do not reach human rights standards, and to grant protection to all asylum seekers from these countries. They should not be describing Iran as a "safe" country after the experiences he has had.

Mr. Amini has stressed that he is continuing his protest on behalf of ALL asylum seekers, regardless of where they are from. "I think the Home Office ought to come out with a full apology, not just to me, but to ALL asylum seekers for the way they have treated them."

Mr Amini said: "When I heard the news [about the Home Office decision to deny the right to appeal] I was saddened - it did not make me happy. Only when all asylum seekers facing the same problems have received a positive decision... will I be happy. This is not just my problem. It is the problem of ALL asylum seekers."

He said that he was not worried that his family would

ask him to change his mind and take some water. He said having spoken to his family by phone this morning only made him more determined to continue with his protest: "This morning I spoke to them and they gave me hope and aspiration to continue. I felt hundreds of times better. They prefer that if I have to die in Britain it is far better than that I am returned to Iran." He said his family trusted him and shared his beliefs, and that they would leave the decision whether to continue his protest with him, and respect his decision.

He said that asylum seekers did not come to Britain for economic reasons. "They would not have made the hazardous journey to Britain if conditions in their own countries were better." Speaking of his life in Iran he said: "As far as my own life went, I never had any happy times. My life in Iran has always been unhappy and difficult." "The best thing I would wish for - whether I live or not - is one day to bring an end to 2500 years of oppression and degradation [in Iran]. I hope that one day Iran can be admitted into human society. I hope one day Iran will become an example to the rest of the world."

Even though Mr Amini has achieved a great deal of positive coverage in the media, he says he will continue with his protest. "I will never trust these people

[at the Home Office]...How can I trust people who have admitted they have betrayed us [Asylum Seekers]."

He said that many local people in Nottingham supported him. "A huge number of people fully understand us [asylum seekers] because they live in the same conditions we do." He said he was in contact with many local people and that he had had a lot of support from them.

In Britain, he said, "everyone is very respectful and humane in their behaviour towards me - even people I don't know smile at me in the street. I think many people care about peoples' rights and attend human rights rallies. I am very appreciative of the way I and others have been treated here."

Mr Amini said "Even in Nottingham, in the centre of Britain, all kinds of local people have told me the government does not treat them fairly. I can say this because they have told me themselves. They feel let down by the government."

Mr. Amini's case has been badly handled by the Home Office, which has now had to admit that it has made a mistake. Mistakes of this kind prove very costly, since they affect peoples' lives.

**Sam Azad, International Federation of Iranian Refugees.**

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