

Regarding: rejected asylum seekers from Denmark presenting in your country

To:

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Canada and United States of America:

SOS Against Racism, Denmark and the Danish Refugees Underground Committee appeal to the listed countries not to return rejected asylum seekers who have fled from asylum centers in Denmark. The reason is that Denmark at the moment does not fulfill her obligations under the UN Refugee Convention and the UN Convention against Torture.

Denmark has decided to forcibly deport 11 convicted Iraqis, who have previously served their sentences in Danish prisons, to central or southern parts of Iraq. Nine of the evictions are planned to be carried out during the next days or weeks. On May 22nd the first two Iraqis were sent to Baghdad without appropriate identification documents. A repatriation agreement with Iraqi authorities was lacking, and they were arrested upon arrival, but are now set free. One of the deported persons came to Denmark 8 years old, had formerly obtained refugee status in Denmark and is married to a Danish woman. Media focus in Denmark may have saved them from torture. Torture is widely used in Iraqi prisons, according to reports from the UNHCR, from which we have included some relevant quotations. (hvor er de?)

SOS Against Racism, Denmark and the Danish Refugees Underground Committee condemns the Danish government's planned forced deportations of convicted Iraqis from Denmark to Central and Southern parts of Iraq. Amnesty International, Denmark and The Danish Refugee Council has likewise expressed sharp criticism of the government's behaviour.

The forced deportations violate the UN Convention against Torture and the UN Refugee Convention, both conventions are ratified by Denmark.

The leader of UNHCR in Stockholm, Hans ten Feld, says that Danish authorities do not follow recommendations from UNHCR, and that these are very clear: Iraqis from the Southern and Central Iraq need international protection because of serious violations of human rights in these areas. They should be recognized as refugees or receive another kind of protection in the countries they flee to.

At the moment a case against Denmark about an earlier forced deportation of an Iranian 18 year old boy is pending at the European Court of Human Rights. In that case the Iranian boy, who had earlier been tortured in Iran before his flight to Denmark, was forcibly deported to Iran where he was tortured during 2 years and imprisoned for another year until his grandmother succeeded to find him and get him released on bail. He later returned to Denmark with severe sequelae from torture. Other rejected asylum seekers have also been forcibly deported to Iran and other countries where they have been tortured.

Before the recent deportations, two Iraqi rejected asylum seekers from Denmark who returned "voluntarily" after pressure from Denmark, have been kidnapped in Iraq. One was bought free with a ransom, while another, a boy, was found dead later, since it was not possible for his mother to provide the requested ransom.

The human rights situation in Southern and Central Iraq is still very serious, and torture seems widely used in Iraqi prisons according to the attached extracts from two reports from the UNHCR.

Besides the current case about forced deportations of Iraqi asylum seekers, asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers are treated very badly in Denmark. The purpose is to receive as few as possible refugees and give asylum to as few as possible, as part of a xenophobic agenda. For this reason the definition of a refugee has been narrowed compared to that in the UN Convention, usually a person will only be granted asylum if he or she can prove that he or she is individually persecuted. This is of course a distortion of the purpose of the Convention, who claims this right to any member of a persecuted group.

Some rejected asylum seekers have been here for more than 10 years, and 800 have been here for more than 3 years, during this period they have been denied basic human rights to work and education etc. They have lived in asylum centres, not being able to decide where they want to live. Rejected asylum seekers have no right to appeal the decision, and if they do not leave the country voluntarily after having been rejected, they are punished with so-called "motivational incentives" that among other things include control at the Danish police usually 1 - 2 times a week. They only receive very little cash money for nutrition or food allowances, they are moved to a deportation centre, and they may be imprisoned. Asylum seekers children don't have the right to education in public schools in Denmark, and many have received little and inadequate education without a possibility for a concluding exam when they finish school. These measures puts deliberate pressure on them to leave the country voluntarily or to sign that they will cooperate with the authorities for a voluntary leave. The reasons why they don't sign such a declaration is fear of persecution, torture and war or civil war in the country they fled from.

Denmark also deports minors without necessarily having examined if they are victims of trafficking.

In the hope that your country will show compassion with refugees, including minors and rejected asylum seekers, who have lived in Denmark without basic rights for years, and give them protection and a possibility for a life without fear.

Yours sincerely

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