

RAPAR

the Manchester based human rights organisation working with displaced people

February 17th 2011

Press Release – for immediate release

FLIGHT TO IRAN DEFERRED AS MANCHESTER MP INTERVENES IN ASYLUM CASE

Public meeting will call for immediate halt to deportations to Iran

Manchester MP Sir Gerald Kaufman has again intervened in the case of Mohammed Vahidi, who faced removal from the UK for the third time today (February 17th 2011). This morning, Mr Vahidi's lawyers were told by the UK Border Agency that the removal instructions had been deferred.

Mr Vahidi, his wife Zahra and one of their sons, 18 year old son Farhad, who formerly lived in Gorton, have been in detention since December. They were due to be forcibly removed from the UK just before Christmas but that flight was also deferred.

Alongside older brother Farid aged 21, Zahra and Farhad have now made their own individual applications for asylum which are being considered by the UKBA. At present, Mr and Mrs Vahidi are in Yarl's Wood detention centre, Farhad is in Harmondsworth and Farid is in Manchester - but liable to be detained at any time.

The family sought asylum in the UK because of Mr Vahidi's unknowing involvement in the leaking of information about his place of work which had connections to the Iranian government's nuclear programme.

A spokesperson for RAPAR said: "We are very concerned that the UK Border Agency continues to attempt to deport people to Iran despite the very unstable situation in that country and the fact that people who protest against the government are targeted and persecuted.

"We are working with the Iranian community in Manchester to organise a public meeting highlighting the fact that the UK Government is deporting people to Iran despite the horrendous abuses of human rights which are currently taking place there. The hypocrisy is staggering. This week, Foreign Secretary William Hague called upon Iranian authorities to protect freedom of expression and association in Iran saying that he had "seen reports today of peaceful demonstrators being assaulted by Iranian security forces", so how can it be safe to return anybody there? Why is the British Government deporting to Iran?"

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