

Al-Muntada

Of the Iraqi Association

www.iraqiasociation.org

IRAQI ASSOCIATION

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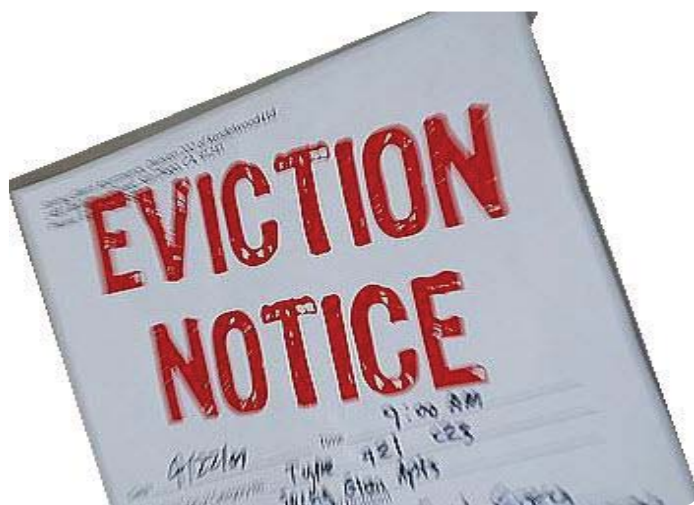
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Eviction Sparks Fear



Iraqi Association is one of sixteen charities which were forced to leave the King Street Palingswick House in January after it was sold to the West London Free School by the Hammersmith council. Some of the charities have moved into new community space on the Edwards Woods Estate near Shepherds Bush. Iraqi Association has been operating for over 18 years in Palingswick house, providing essential frontline services to local people. Every year, the charity services more than 3000 people, using a prudent budget and add value to local services.

The relocation was not fully thought through, with telephone and online communication failure, as well as that; the current available office space

will severely curtail our project development work, including recruiting volunteers.

Furthermore, Hammersmith and Fulham council made that decision without considering alternative services, as well as that, the financial compensation was not set for the loss of business. This may lead to an uncertain future for many local voluntary groups in the borough. Although the council allocated £330,000 to the management body of the Palingswick house (PHL), not as compensation, but to help local voluntary groups strengthen their future financial reserve. Since then, the affected charities have requested a clarification from the council and the Charity Commission whether this is compensation or a grant to PHL.

Domestic Violence, the Hidden Crime



Prof. Abdullah Mawsawi and Mrs. Ansam Jarah

Recently, Iraqi Association has organized a meeting on Domestic Violence, to raise awareness about this hidden crime. The panel was made of Miss Ansam Jarah, Iraqi civil society activist and Professor Abdullah Mawsawi, 40 people attended the discussion in the borough of Hammersmith. The meeting explored this hidden crime and that victims of domestic violence come from all walks of life, all cultures, all income groups, all ages, all religions. They share feelings of helplessness, isolation, guilt, fear, and shame. Very few will tell anyone—a friend, a relative, a neighbor, or the police. The meeting also debated that men and women who follow their parents' example and

use violence to solve family conflicts are teaching the same destructive behavior to their children. Iraqi Association is planning to develop a community project in this area to raise awareness in two languages, and serve those who have been affected by this evil act. The meeting also highlighted some specific points which often leads to domestic violence such as:

- Arguments with teenage children
- Disagreements over child discipline
- Sibling rivalry between children
- Long term unemployment of one or both parents
- Heavy alcohol consumption
- Poor communication between parents and children

The Next Mayor Must Engage with Marginalised Communities

At the election time, our community participates well in the voting process. Although the root of the Iraqis in this country goes back to 1930s, the visibility of its settlement is still not touching the attention of the media.

Nowadays, most live in the London area and actively involved in all the sectors of this vibrant capital, with clusters of the community in other regions of the country.

However, as a non-sectarian organisation, Iraqi Association, like other marginalised groups, hope that the next Mayor will engage directly with them, and that previous approaches of 'symbolic gesture' must not become a norm again.

Often, the poorest communities tend to be minority communities that have been targets of long-standing discrimination, exclusion and sometimes violence.

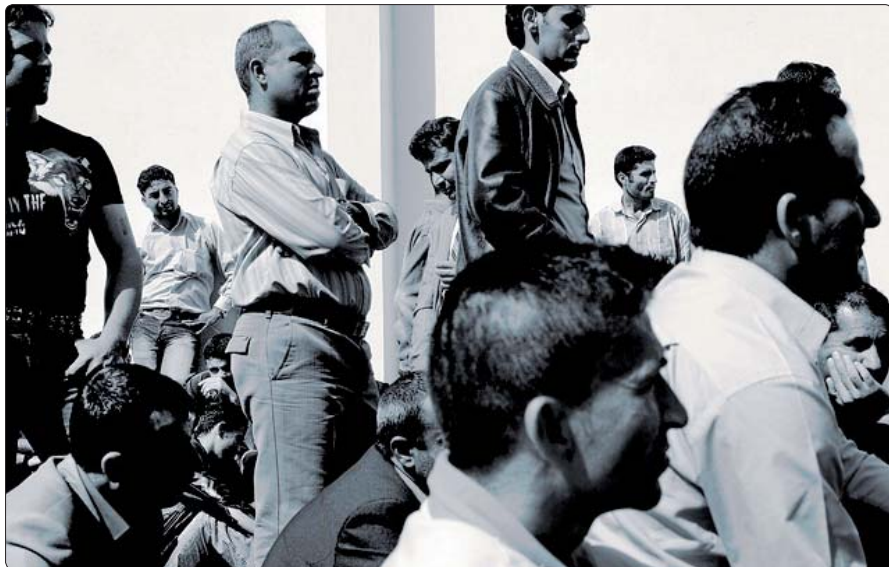
A key message here is that, poverty within minority communities must be viewed as both a cause and a manifestation of the diminished rights, opportunities, and social advancement available to the members of those communities.

Discrimination and inequality circumscribe every aspect of the lives

of many of our community members. They are often denied equal access to opportunities. Racist notions in the wider community may limit their employment possibilities to the most low-waged and precarious options. When their rights are violated, recourse to institutions of justice is often a distant possibility. Additionally, disadvantaged minorities are commonly poorly represented in political structures and decision making bodies and consequently have little control over decisions that affect them.

As we know that London has the largest gap between rich and poor of any city in the developed world. It is obvious that the greater this gap, the greater the problems for all, rich or poor. Economic inequality harms everyone. It also costs the taxpayer. We believe that with the greater new power of the London Mayor, a new approach must be taken to address this. With austerity and cuts making this worse, and adding to this, the recent eviction of our charity by the Hammersmith council, have raised fear among our community. This is happening against the backdrop of some of the highest indicators of poverty and deprivation among young members of our community.

Syrian Violence Curtailed Resettlement Process



Iraqis outside UNHCR Office near Damascus

The unrest in Syria, home to more Iraqi refugees than any other country, has added another layer of delay to the visa resettlement process in the United States. For Iraqis in Syria applying for refugee status in the United States, the uprising brings renewed threats of violence and has indefinitely delayed their application. After closing the U.S. embassy in Damascus on January 16th 2012, the vast majority of applicants are left in limbo. Immigration officials have also warned that Iraqis who return home will be penalized because their return would undercut their claims of being at risk.

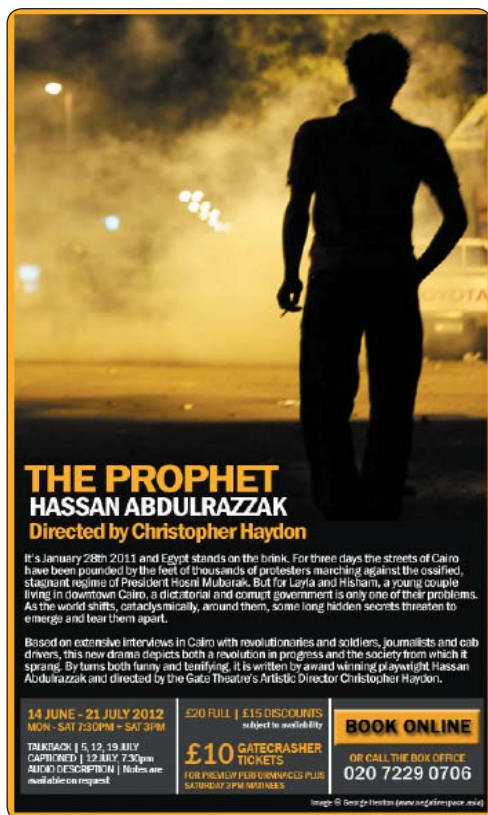
In 2011, fewer Iraqis were admitted than at any time since 2007. Last year, at the end of September, 9,388 Iraqi refugees were admitted to the United States, compared with more than 18,000 the previous year, and nearly 20,000 Iraqis in Syria are in

various stages of applying for visas to enter the United States.

Closing the visa office in Damascus has meant no staff to conduct the in-person interviews – a necessary step to complete the application. The U.S. government has declined any makeshift adaptations suggested by refugee groups, such as conducting interviews by videoconference. “They are caught between a rock and no place,” said Becca Heller of the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project, who added, “A simple solution to that would be to agree to conduct interviews by videoconference.”

Imagine being one of Iraq’s most vulnerable refugees in Syria. Your choice is this: remain in Syria and face escalating violence, including the possible risk of targeted violence, or return to the threats you faced in Iraq and lose your refugee application.

The Prophet by Hassan Abdulrazzak



14 June – 21 July 2012
Mon – Sat 7.30 pm + Sat 3pm
At the Gate theatre: 11 Pembridge road, above the Prince Albert Pub, Notting Hill, London, W11 3HQ
Website: <http://www.gatetheatre.co.uk> Box Office: 020 7229 0706
Tube: NOTTING HILL GATE Central, District & Circle Line - Exit 3 (signposted to Portobello Road)

In summer of 2011, I was asked to write a play about the revolution in Egypt by the artistic director of the Gate theatre, Christopher Haydon. We didn’t have a story at first, just some loose ideas we wanted to examine. We were both attracted to the idea of a leaderless revolution. We knew that as theatre makers we had to craft a drama that is compelling enough on its own terms but that can also serve as a metaphor for what happened in Egypt. I started writing the first draft in November 2011 focusing on the story of a young couple stuck in their marriage. The play charts the events of one day, 28th January 2011, in the life of this middle class couple. The husband Hisham is a writer who is blocked and wants to seek the help of a mysterious woman called Suzanne to move forward with his book. Hisham’s wife Layla, who works as an engineer for Vodafone, is asked by Hani her boss to switch off the phone network to prevent protesters from communicating with one another. As the play unfolds, the world of this young couple begins to shift cataclysmically and some long hidden secrets threaten to emerge and tear them apart. Christopher and I went to Cairo in January 2012 to interview people involved in the revolution. We spoke to many activists, journalists, filmmakers,

actors and writers as well as ordinary people who were part of the revolution. We met a member of the Muslim Brotherhood who was very keen on giving us the impression that the brotherhood will be inclusive when they come to power. We also ended up accidentally interviewing a major in the army after being detained by the army for taking photographs of them. The army kept Christopher under their watch whilst I had to go back to our hotel to bring over our passports, which the major insisted on seeing. Another memorable event was Christopher and I going on a march against SCAF (Supreme Council of the Armed Forces), which started out peacefully enough, but then at some point rocks were hurled at us. We didn’t know who was throwing the rock, whether it was some government thugs or just some troublesome kids. The march turned chaotic as everyone ran to get away from the falling rocks. This gave us a taste of the courage it took to withstand the violence that was unleashed by the government against demonstrators in January and February 2011. The trip was a wonderful opportunity to gauge what happened to the revolution one year on. The first hand accounts we collected during the trip became part of the play.



Largest number of Iraqi refugees returning home since 2004



According to new statistics from UNHCR 62,340 Iraqi refugees returned to Iraq between December 2010 and November 2011. This is the highest number since 2004, when 193,997 refugees returned home. Syria who has been hosting the largest number of refugees informed that 24,730 Iraqis returned home in 2011. The UN agency, UNHCR believes that many decided to return in 2011 as the Iraqi government increased support to former refugees.

SHABABAT BABYL & ESSEQUJBO MUSIC
 Cry of Baghdad – A Concert of Hope
 A charity concert organised by Iraqi Association in support of Children Education Centre in Al-Thawra district of Baghdad on 10/12/2011.

IRAQI ASSOCIATION (IA)



The Iraqi Association is a non-profit organisation that exists to enable Iraqis to settle and integrate in this country with rights to express their cultural identities. Our work aimed at Iraqis, by providing volunteerism, advice, public health support, counselling, training, employment guidance, information

services, and organising cultural events. It is also our mission to raise awareness about relevant events in Iraq and the integration process in this country.”

Our Aims and Methods:

We provide the following services to our clients regardless of their race, ethnic origin, language,

and gender, religious or political background.

- Face-to-face support session
- Group empowerment session
- Workshop advice session
- Training session
- Outreach work
- Client-led information