

# Death by Deportation ?

## STOP FORCED DEPORTATIONS

*As you read this, asylum seekers in Australia's refugee prisons are on a countdown to deportation.*

**The Howard Government has announced that every Iranian currently held in detention will be deported back to Iran by the end of May 2003.**

These people have fled one of the most violent and repressive regimes on earth. According to George W Bush and John Howard, Iran is part of the "axis of evil" - a regime as bad as Saddam Hussein's. But since their arrival in Australia, Iranians have been locked up -without charge or trial – in high-security jails located in some of the most remote areas of Australia. They have survived the horror and brutality of Australia's detention camps for months and years. They have been denied refugee status by an inhumane and bewildering bureaucracy, and by a Government intent on whipping up scare campaigns against refugees in order to serve its own ends.

Now, these people are facing forcible deportation back to the regime from which they fled. In the last few days of April 2003, each Iranian refugee held in Australia's detention centres was given an interview with the Department of Immigration.

The Department told them that they must agree to being returned to Iran within 28 days. Otherwise, whatever force necessary will be used to get them on a plane. Past deportations from Australian detention centres have involved people being bashed, drugged, then bound and gagged. Even refugees who still have court appeals and Refugee Review Tribunal hearings pending have been told they will be forcibly removed within a month. Many of these people have been rejected by Phillip Ruddock's Department of Immigration. But as Nader's story (below) shows, many of these people face very real consequences if the Government succeeds in deporting them.

### What you can do

**Get involved with Project SafeCom Inc. - by becoming a member and supporting our work - see <http://www.safecom.org/ref-member.htm>**

**Visit any or all of the following websites for information and ideas:**

<http://www.safecom.org/iranians.htm> (Our page about the situation of Iranians and what awaits them upon arrival)

<http://www.safecom.org/nada1.htm> (Our page about NADA, the National Anti-Deportation Alliance, with nearly twenty affiliated groups and organisations)

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18276.htm> (Iran's record on Human rights)

**Urgently write letters/ emails** to the media, to members of Parliament, to your friends, call radio stations etc- at this stage one of the only weapons we have is getting the word out there and trying to create a scandal around deportations which is big enough to at least delay the government. 1700 East Timorese refugees currently in danger of immediate deportation have been assisted by public and media awareness of their situation. For addresses of members of parliament see: <http://www.aph.gov.au/whoswho/>

**Project SafeCom Inc. P.O. Box 364, Narrogin WA - Phone 041 70 90 130  
Email: [admin@safecom.org](mailto:admin@safecom.org) - web: <http://www.safecom.org/refugees.htm>**

We acknowledge Refugee Action Committee Canberra for the production of this flyer: <http://www.refugeeaction.org/>

# Project SafeCom Inc. - Information Sheet 10

## Nader's Story

Nader and his brother came to Australia as stowaways on a ship arriving in Victoria in September 2000. The brothers were fleeing persecution in Iran following mass demonstrations for access to water in the city of Abadan. Twenty-three people were shot dead at this protest and hundreds disappeared.

Police targeted Nader and a friend because they were working class activists who helped organise the demonstrations. They and Nader's brother escaped by asking their seaman friend to hide them in the ceiling space of his cabin.

When they arrived in Australia they declared themselves as refugees. But all four were placed in detention, with the seaman who saved their lives being charged with "people smuggling". Nader's brother, unable to bear separation from his wife and children, returned voluntarily in August 2001 and disappeared. Attempts by his family to find out what happened have been unsuccessful.

Nader was the main witness in the court case against his friend, who was found guilty of three counts of people smuggling. In summing up, the magistrate acknowledged that there was clearly no financial motive involved and his friend, a seaman and a unionist, had done this for humanitarian reasons. During this court case no attempt was made to suppress the identity of the Iranians. The case was reported in Iranian newspapers and on cable television with pictures of Nader.

Nader broke down as he described missing his wife and children and being in detention for 20 months. He said, "I saved my life but lost my spirit."

Despite pleas from advocates in Melbourne, Nader was returned to the Perth Immigration Detention Centre. While in Melbourne, he was kept in isolation and not allowed contact with his friend whom he had not seen for 12 months. Nader was depressed and suicidal, slashing his wrists in April and locking himself in the toilet. He was discovered, however, and taken to hospital. After that time, he was kept in isolation.

Nader was forcibly removed from the Perth Detention Centre in May 2002. Witnesses report that he put up a struggle but was overcome by guards and injected with sedatives. He was then restrained and deported on the same ship on which he had arrived, from the WA port of Esperance, despite last-ditch attempts by the Maritime Union of Australia as well as from Unions WA to stop the deportation.

On arrival in Iran he was taken away and has since disappeared - apparently killed. To this day no one knows his fate. The two friends he escaped with were subsequently given refugee visas.

## A Glance at the Iran we are deporting people to

from : <http://www.iranncrfac.org>

- 120,000 executions on political grounds: victims include pregnant women, elderly women and school children.
- 30,000 political prisoners massacred in 1988 ... more each year
- Over 170 forms of physical and psychological torture
- Stoning, hanging in public, eye gouging, amputation of fingers, hands and legs, beheading and flogging in public carried out as "punishment"
- Discrimination against women in law and practice
- Suppression of religious and ethnic minorities
- 474 public executions announced in 2002, a rise of 50% on the previous year
- 80 newspapers, and periodicals have been closed down by the regime since April 2000. Dozens of journalists remain in jail.
- Highest suicide rate in the world - 200 fatal suicide attempts 100,00 population
- 1,500 leave the country every day, fleeing the mullahs' repression

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