

Beat: Local

Family Statement of the Deceased, Saif Fassal Rekan

A Young Iraqi Footballer in Sweden

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USPA NEWS - On July 24, 2021, our son Saif Fassal Rekan, a 22yr young Iraqi football player tragically died in a drowning accident in Björklingsbadet lake, north of Uppsala, Sweden. The lake's vicinity was not provided with any warning signs, general safety tools, or lifeguard which could have changed the unfortunate course of events.

Prior to his death, our son has long-awaited. He was drained, depleted, and consumed by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) appalling bureaucracy that was inflicted on him for three long years where he had to travel across the northern regions of Sweden, a very cold and harsh environment with fewer opportunities, as per the decisions of the said organisation. The academic life, sports career, and the right of a free, dignified life were severely impacted.

Despite Saif's suffering with the IMO in Sweden, our son persisted on being authentic and transparent to acquire a basic human right for he has great confidence in his asylum case and the documents presented thereof which represent undeniable, irrefutable evidence for any professional conscientious person. The evidence submitted by Saif confirmed that his life was threatened by terrorism. The reason being that he is the son of a great martyr who was the governor of Anbar province, known for his heroic actions in defeating Al-Qaeda in 2006- 2007 by mediating and joining forces with the local tribes to revolt against the evil forces of terrorism and set security and stability in the province.

The heroic acts of the father did not go unpunished as he was assassinated by a suicide bomber at Al-Mansour Hotel (Milia) on June 25, 2007. These hateful acts extended in 2016 when ISIS conducted several genocidal massacres against the youth of Albin tribe, the one to which Saif belonged. Despite all the foregoing, the IMO in Sweden did not treat these evidences in a realistic and professional manner, and adopted abhorrent discriminatory acts in dealing with "Saif" asylum case, far from the principles of international humanitarian law, requirements for asylum and the risks and threats that await him in particular. We regret to say that the IMO participated in the completion of the revenge of terrorism against us and our son, and even deviated from the rules of its humanitarian charter. Many young people were honest and transparent with the said organisation, including "Saif"; Young people who were seeking for their rights and aspirations away from danger. The IMO became the obstacle to such dreams with their unjust decisions.

The IMO in Sweden has deliberately placed these young men, including Saif, in places that are similar to places of detention and exile. Their asylum cases are governed by racist security mentalities, not fully aware of the facts and characteristics in the countries from which they fled. Those people unleashed judgment according to moods and opinions – disregarding reality, and do not consider the interest of their country, or to base the selection process on sound righteous honest standards for people to be part of their societies, and the fact that there is a humanitarian issue. The evidence of negative outcomes of these mentalities is the increase in crime and criminal instability in Sweden.

At a time when the world revealed the practice of the IMO in Sweden, the repercussions of its work, and the consequences of the tragedy that befell us personally as a family, we hold the Government of Sweden responsible for the practices of the said organisation operating on its territory, and its violation of human rights standards when dealing with a group of good young people, including our deceased "Saif", in an approach that will bring Sweden unstable societies and hostility.

The adoption of humanitarian standards is a must, with the necessity of reviewing and evaluating the work of the IMO in Sweden by the competent Swedish authorities. It will have a positive impact, and will reveal racist practices and deviated, misguided opinionated ends that suggest a state of ignorance or deliberate distortion of facts due to hatred.

Our deceased son "Saif" was a victim of these practices which caused him disappointment and frustration after his asylum request was rejected with false arguments that were not logically and correctly based, raising eyebrows among the people of law and justice, in light of the evidence and compelling proofs he possessed despite his long wait for a resolution to his case, which ended with him losing his life, leaving his family to suffer in eternal tragedy, and before all, the organisation destroyed his football dreams of joining a football club in Sweden, which expressed their desire to have him as a player for his skills. The same clubs attempted to help him by asking the organisation to facilitate his asylum request to no avail, as the organisation was refusing to respond and represented a

permanent obstacle to him, and even changed his geographical location and residence far from any club he frequented. The same goes to his right to complete his education in a country he loved very much, i.e., Sweden.

We condemn the work of the International Organisation for Migration (IMO) and its handling of the asylum application case of our deceased son "Saif" on the territory of Sweden and all the hardships inflicted on him by the said organisation which we held fully responsible. Furthermore, we condemn the decisions of those who represented the Government of Sweden in the organisation and did not do justice to our son. We will be approaching the organisations, the Government of Sweden, and other state governments in the world to expose these practices.

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