

RETURN TO IRAQ - SUCCESS STORIES

Hiwa / English - March 2008

The IOM Regional Office in Helsinki, in cooperation with IOM Iraq, the Danish Immigration Service (DIS), the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), Care4You and the Danish Red Cross, offers a comprehensive assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme (AVRR) for Iraqi citizens who want to return to Iraq.

Pre-departure information to returnees in Denmark is provided by IOM Helsinki in cooperation with Care4You and the Danish Red Cross. IOM Helsinki makes travel arrangements, and organizes transit and reception assistance. In addition, IOM organizes the transport of the returnees' cargo boxes from Denmark to Iraq.

On arrival, returnees are met at airports by IOM Iraq staff and provided with additional information about reintegration activities available to them in Iraq. Returnees can benefit from professional counselling, job placement or financial assistance for setting up a small business. Persons interested in further vocational training will be referred to AGEF.

Returnee from Denmark begins new life in Iraq

Hiwa* spent six years in Denmark before he decided to return to Iraq. When he learnt about the new return programme and the assistance that he could receive upon arrival in Iraq he decided that he was ready to leave Denmark.

Hiwa mainly based his decision to take up the offer of assisted voluntary return and reintegration on two factors: he missed his family in Iraq and he had not been granted asylum in Denmark.

Before leaving Denmark, Hiwa received information from Care4You about the opportunities available to him when he returned to Iraq. Hiwa became interested in the small business start-up option provided by IOM, and as he had previous experience in driving a taxi he decided that he would like to open a taxi business. Together with Care4You, Hiwa filled in the IOM business plan and shared it with IOM prior to his return in November 2007.

After Hiwa arrived in Iraq he was offered guidance and counselling by IOM Iraq on how to finalize his business plan and start up the business. With IOM's support, Hiwa's business plan was approved and he was assisted by IOM to buy a suitable car for his taxi business.

Hiwa is now working as a taxi driver in Erbil and on his spare time he enjoys spending time with his family members, moments that he missed for a long time when in Denmark!



Hiwa and his taxi © IOM Iraq 2007

After returning from Denmark Hiwa has realized that he can be successful also in his home country. With the support of his family he runs his taxi business and if he manages to save enough money in the coming months he is planning to buy a lorry and become a lorry driver.

Through the return and reintegration programme, Hiwa has managed to return to Iraq and establish a prospering business. As a successful business man, Hiwa has good prospects of reintegrating socially and economically in the Iraqi society. IOM Iraq continues to monitor Hiwa's business and offers support and guidance when needed.

**Returnee's name has been changed.*

For more information, call IOM Helsinki's Arabic, Kurdish and English-speaking helpline. Opening hours: Monday and Tuesday 12-17, Wednesday to Friday 9-14 (Danish time) (services available to callers in Denmark only):

80 88 93 05

Mission with Regional Functions
Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic States
Unioninkatu 13, 6th floor • P.O. Box 851 •
FI-00101 Helsinki • Finland
Tel: +358.9.684 11 50 • Fax: +358.9.684 11 511 •
E-mail: mrfhelsinki@iom.int