

RETURN TO IRAQ - SUCCESS STORIES

Yusuf / 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 (AVRR) programme 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

Yusuf* spent two years in Denmark before he decided to return to Iraq with the help of IOM. He had received a negative asylum decision and therefore saw no reason to stay longer in a reception centre in Denmark.

Yusuf was also missing his family in Iraq. Before going to Denmark, Yusuf had believed that life could be better abroad. However, after spending two years away from his family he discovered that life abroad was not the best option for him.

In June 2004 Yusuf returned voluntary to Iraq with IOM's assistance and he was met by IOM staff in Iraq upon arrival.

After arriving in Iraq, Yusuf searched for job opportunities available to him in Erbil and he finally decided to go into partnership in a car mechanic garage. However, Yusuf needed some support to be able to contribute to the business and Yusuf's family gladly offered him the support they could.

In 2007 Yusuf applied for assistance from the IOM reintegration programme available to returnees from Denmark. He received counselling and guidance from IOM Iraq on how to develop the business, and his business plan was approved.

With IOM's support Yusuf was able to develop his business and within one year, he has proved to be a good car mechanic; many customers are happy with the services his garage provides.

Yusuf is very pleased with the support and assistance offered by IOM which allowed him to develop his business. At the same time Yusuf is delighted to be reunited with his family. After he returned from Denmark, Yusuf married and he now has two children.



The AVR and reintegration programme has enabled Yusuf to return to Iraq and establish himself as a business man, giving Yusuf an opportunity to reintegrate both socially and economically. IOM Iraq continues to monitor the development of Yusuf's business and provides him with 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):

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