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Saudi Arabia : The forgotten Iraqi refugees in Rafha

There are now at Rafha camp over 5.000 Iraqis which the Saudi authorities refuse to consider as refugees and refer to them as 'guests,' thereby denying them all legal protection guaranteed by international law. This leaves them no option but to return to Iraq or seek resettlement in a third country. But after the halt of the resettlement programme which saw over 24,000 Iraqi refugees resettled by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Europe, North America and Australia, this has narrowed down to the single option of returning to Iraq.

Amnesty International reiterates its concern over the continuing suffering of the Iraqi refugees at Rafha camp in northern Saudi Arabia and the uncertainty of their future, after reports that dozens of them have been on hunger strike since 23 June in protest at the halt in 1997 of a programme of resettlement in third countries.

The organization has recent footage of interviews of former Iraqi refugees which will be made available to the media at request.

Some former Iraqi refugees will be also available for interviews.

For more information please contact Amnesty International's press office at the following telephone number : (44) 207 413 55 66

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