

Report: Britain abandoning Iraqi workers

by UPI

LONDON -- Human rights groups are criticizing Britain's refusal to help Iraqi staff emigrate when British troops leave Iraq and the ex-employees face dangerous futures. As many as 91 Iraqi interpreters, aides and their families are concerned they will be targeted by militants as "collaborators" with the British forces. British law only grants refugee status to people who get into the country, The Times of London said Tuesday. One translator named A Kinani wrote a personal appeal for help in May while Tony Blair was still prime minister. He sent along excellent references from a senior British military commander in southern Iraq, but was turned down, the newspaper said. The Iraqi translator was told by a former foreign policy adviser he was not eligible for asylum, and it was suggested he go to a third country and apply for a visa from there. "This is cowardly," Kinani told The Times. "The British make us easy food near the lion's mouth." Meanwhile, the United States has said it will accept 7,000 Iraqis this year who have helped the U.S. war effort, and Denmark last month granted asylum to 60 former Iraqi staff and their families.

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