

KHRW -- Reference for Kurdish community: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Cell)
[REDACTED] (Office) After 3 (T-F) (Say that [REDACTED] gave reference)

Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Inc.
10157 SW Barbur Blvd, Suite 202C
Portland, OR 97219

History

Kurdish Human Rights Watch (KHRW) - an NGO that started as a voice for Kurds everywhere, and now, its mission is to empower the Kurds, refugees, new-arrivals, asylees, and whole communities in the United States and abroad in achieving individual and community self-sufficiency and integration by assisting the newcomers with training in various aspects of American life. KHRW is also a prominent source for up-to-date information on the Kurdish people. More information can be founds at <http://www.khrw.org>

They work with immigration, FBI, police, Department of Human Resources, and work with mosques, as well as churches and synagogues. (IRCO)

KHRW started in 1983 in Baghdad, and has been serving refugees and immigrants to the United States since 1989.

The director was Mustafa Karadaji who died three years ago, now his wife, Dr. Pary Karadaji, is the head of KHRW.

Funding was received by Office of Refugee Resettlement. The KHRW Portland office began on November 1st, 2003

1st grant was given by Healthy Marriage enrichment, which deals with family related issues. The second grant was given by Ethnic Community Self-Help (helping people transition into the U.S. workforce). These grants are distributed among ALL offices.

Mr. Karadaji started KHRW because the Kurdish people have no rights. KHRW was formed in order to preserve the culture and language of the Kurdish people, as well as fight for their rights. Now, it reaches out to all refugees and asylees to help.

KHRW SW caters to people from all over (Persian, African, Afghani, Iraqi, Pakistani, Indian, Irani).

Office Factors: SW Portland has the most diverse community. There's a Jewish kosher deli, Halal food store, and mosque all nearby.

The purpose of this office is as broad as any organization can be, to help the community with their needs, whether it be help with obtaining green cards or citizenship, to learning English or how to swim. Shakhawan also teaches classes in communication/role playing for family disputes, and has volunteers from PCC to help clients learn English.

Shakhawan Shekhani Background

Shakhawan Shekhani is the only person running the Portland KHRW office, but uses networks of various people (teachers, volunteers, NGOs). Contacted Dr. Pary Karadaji in 2000 asking about setting up an office in Portland.

He appeared in the Oregonian on March 31, 2003 (article on him).

Shakawan was born in Kirkuk, can become a guerilla (freedom fighter) in Iraq from the age of 14 to 18, where he stayed in the mountains and did not complete schooling as a result.

Between 1992 and 1996, he became a guardian for the USAID office in Kirkuk.

Challenges

Clients, refugees have communication breakdown. Resettling in the U.S. takes adjusting to a language and cultural differences. Financially, KHRW has had huge contributions from various grants, as previously mentioned.

Activities

There is a Kurdish dance once every month, where the Kurdish community wears their native clothing, play Kurdish music, and eat Kurdish food.

Kurd Community

Prior to 1996, there was only one Kurdish person living in Portland. Bill Clinton, using USAID, helped bring over around 5,000 Kurds from Northern Iraq in 1996. The asylees were transported to Guam via Turkey and spent 6 months in Guam to be taught American culture and norms, after which, they were distributed to different part of the U.S.

Primarily the asylees came from 4 cities in northern Iraq: Dahuk, Irbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Kirkuk. Now, the asylees are bringing in their own families, after working for several years and being able to afford their families to come over to the U.S. According to an Oregonian article (Oregonian, February 19, 2004, **FOR KURDS, AID AND ADVOCACY**)

Dr. Pary Karadaghi estimates there are 1,500 Kurdish refugees in the Portland area, from

Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria.

Shekhawan Shekhani estimates that there are hundreds of Kurdish families in SW portland alone.

Administrative Setup

Shekhawan Shekahnani is the sole director and administrator, and has about 12 volunteers currentl: 6 Kurdish volunteer men. 2 Kurdish volunteer women, and 4 Americans. The institution is a secular organization which deals with human rights, so the only media relationship is concerning the Iraq War. However, KHRW does also cater to the religious needs of the Kurdish families by teaching the children how to read Kurdish as well as arabic, and makes booklets to teach the children how to read the Koran.