

MEDICAL REFORM GROUP

Box 40074, Toronto, Ontario M6B 4K4

July 15, 2005.

Honourable Joe Volpe, Minister
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1

Fax: (613) 992-9791
Dr. Salam T. Ismael, File: V050600215

Dear Minister:

I am writing on behalf of the Medical Reform Group of Ontario to seek an explanation for the refusal of our government to facilitate the Canadian speaking tour of Dr. Salam Ismael, general secretary of Doctors for Iraq, an Iraqi NGO which has had considerable experience in monitoring the progress of hostilities there on the human rights of civilians and very particularly of their access to health services.

We understand Dr. Ismael has been told the denial of permission to enter Canada is due to his failure to persuade the officer in the office in Amman, Jordan of his stated reasons for the tour. While we understand and appreciate the need to investigate all visa applicants thoroughly, we are very concerned that such investigations proceed in a way that is fair and completely transparent. Dr. Ismael already has a reputation in many European countries as a compelling and balanced speaker, and we believe that Canadians would benefit by exposure to his presentations and the evidence he would be able to provide on the effects of the war on his compatriots.

We urge you to reconsider this unfortunate response to Dr. Ismael's initial application to enter Canada on an urgent basis so that he can combine the trip to Canada in his current itinerary, and minimize the time he will be away from his home base.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gordon Guyatt,
For the Medical Reform Group
cc. Dr. Jane Pritchard, Dr. James Loney, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Toronto