

## Simply Impermissible

Sam Ahmad is a **war hero** and has the medals to prove it - the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal and the War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. But he's a civilian, not a soldier, and an Iraqi citizen to boot.

After putting his life on the line for the United States in Iraq, death threats by anti-coalition forces forced Sam - whose entire family had been wiped out by Saddam Hussein's gas attack on Halabja - to flee to the United States under the auspices of a **2006 law granting visas to Iraqi translators**. Sam was granted the visa, and subsequently granted asylum.

The next step is the "green card," or permanent residence. But in a stunning case of the left hand not knowing the right hand is even on the same planet, the government turned Sam down, saying he is "inadmissible" because he once belonged to a "terrorist" group. That group would be the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP,) a group that sought the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and now holds seats in the Iraqi parliament.

Is the KDP on a U.S. government list of terrorist organizations? No. USCIS decided the KDP is a bad apple based on one **unofficial** non-governmental website, a DHS-funded anti-terrorism think tank in Oklahoma.

Did Sam hide his KDP past on his translator visa and asylum applications? No. That was fully disclosed from the get-go.

So, wait a minute: if Sam is "inadmissible," did the government make a mistake granting him his translator visa and asylum? Will Sam be deported? The government claims Sam is safe in the U.S. for the time being, and his lawyer, **Thomas Ragland**, says the **recent publicity** has prompted USCIS to look into the matter.

The twisted absurdities of the "material support" provisions have been the subject of articles by **Margaret Stock** and others, and have prompted DHS Secretary Chertoff to exercise "**discretionary authority**" and to call for further legislation and regulation.

In the end, USCIS should reverse their bone-headed decision and put procedures in place to make sure the error is not repeated. They called Sam "inadmissible." But what we've done to Sam is simply impermissible.

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