

DOHA: Iraq's First Lady and KSC Patron Delivers Powerful Call for Global Unity to Tackle Migration at Qatar Conference

Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmed shares personal experience as a refugee, urging for a united global response to family and child welfare in times of crisis.

KSC – Press Release

4 November 2024

Doha, Qatar – First Lady of Iraq Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmed delivered a powerful speech at the International Year of the Family Conference held in Doha, Qatar from October 29-31. Emphasizing her commitment to supporting migrant families and vulnerable communities, she called for a holistic approach to tackling the global migration crisis, urging regional and global cooperation to develop sustainable solutions in the face of conflict and extreme weather conditions.

In her speech, Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmed, who also serves as patron of Kurdistan Save the Children (KSC), underscored the importance of including affected communities in policy development, ensuring their voices are heard in shaping meaningful and lasting changes. She advocated for a comprehensive approach to health, education and social services, provided consistently until families can return home, rather than temporary assistance. Legal status, she stressed, is essential for migrants to access these services effectively.

The First Lady also highlighted the need for reintegration programs to help families navigate local systems, such as enrolling in schools, registering with general practitioners and finding support networks, as well as specialized childcare and early integration services for young children. Calling for a unified effort to prevent conflicts that drive forced migration, she reiterated that addressing root causes is essential for building a stable and hopeful future for all.

The following is an excerpt from her speech:

“I have lived in many countries—Egypt, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Britain. The experience was harsh, especially for a child who doesn't understand why they must leave their home and country. Now, over 70 years old, I'm still waiting to return to the first home I left. I remember that day vividly; it was dawn and they told me no one should know we were leaving. We were taken out one by one. I held a doll I wanted to take with me, but they told me I couldn't bring anything. So, I put my doll back on my bed. They promised we would return.


This experience is just one of thousands faced by Iraqi families enduring hardships and displacement.

There isn't an Iraqi expatriate who doesn't wake up thinking of the song, 'Ya Nabaa Al-Rayhan.'

Contact KSC:

 Main Office Location: 408 Rizgary Hapsa Khani Naqib St. Slemani- Kurdistan/Iraq.

 Contact: +964 53 330 1040

 Website: www.ksc-kcf.org

 Email: press@ksc-kcf.org

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As a refugee with limited support for integration, I had to restart my higher education six times, learn multiple languages and adapt to various cultures alongside my children. Now British citizens, my children grew up with our mother tongue, preserving our heritage and later returned to Iraq with their own families. Passing down values and customs across generations is a responsibility mothers carry.

Today, many countries focus on closing borders and restricting migration, while selectively allowing in skilled professionals. This approach risks draining talent from regions that need it most. Every day, people risk their lives in search of a better future, driven by economic reasons or the belief in a better life elsewhere. If we work collectively, even in small ways, we can start to change these conditions.”



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ABOUT KSC

KSC is a non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian organization that provides assistance to children regardless of race, gender, political or religious affiliation. It operates through four essential programs: Child Protection, Education, Health and Youth Ability Development as well as emergency relief during disasters.

KSC's main aim is to work directly or indirectly to ensure a better future for children by improving and providing their various medical, social, economic and educational needs.

KSC was co-founded in 1991 by Hero Ibrahim Ahmad and Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmad, currently First Lady of Iraq.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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