

Canada rejects US Iraq war deserter

By [Global Research](#)

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Canada has refused to grant refuge to a female US soldier – the first to seek asylum in the country. Kimberly Rivera faces imprisonment if deported back to her homeland.

Rivera deserted the Iraq war two years ago. Today, the 26-year old is fighting in Toronto to keep her freedom.

“I cry almost every day just because I know how blessed I am,” Rivera said.

However, her liberty may soon be ripped away. Canadian authorities have rejected her request for refugee status, making her the first female U.S. soldier to face deportation.

“What I face, going back, is separation from my family and imprisonment,” River said.

Rivera and her husband Mario have used YouTube to appeal for asylum and have posted a personal post to Canada’s Prime Minister, Stephen Harper.

Mario may also face time in jail and the children may be taken away from them and put in foster care.

A mother of three, Kimberley Rivera says she deserted Iraq in protest at what she calls an “illegal and immoral war.”

She is among the 8,000 U.S. soldiers who have deserted since the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003.

She fled just three months into her tour.

“The soldiers don’t want to be there. The civilians don’t want us to be there. Nodody wants to keep doing it,” she said.

Polls show that two thirds of Canadians support U.S. war resisters seeking refuge on humanitarian grounds.

Last year, the Canadian Parliament passed a non-binding motion granting asylum to deserters. Since then, however, the country’s immigration minister has rejected seven refugee applications.

It’s a stark contrast to the days of the Vietnam War, when Canada gave refuge to more than 50,000 draft dodgers.

Many believe the present day minority conservative government doesn’t want to risk upsetting Washington.

Presently, around 200 U.S. soldiers resisting the war are believed to be living in Canada.

Kimberly is one of five facing deportation in the next two weeks. Her return home and potential punishment would take place under the new leadership of President Barack Obama.

The U.S. Commander-In-Chief has been heavily critical of the Iraq war, a stance which was central to his election campaign.

With Obama committed to withdrawing from Iraq in 16 months and closing Guantanamo Bay within a year, the question remains whether those soldiers whose principles coincide with Obama's should be penalized.

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For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca