

Chaldean Christian immigrant Jimmy Al-Daoud dies after US deports him to Iraq

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A Chaldean Christian immigrant to the US, Jimmy Al-Daoud, who was deported to Iraq, has reportedly died because he was unable to obtain insulin to treat his diabetes.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, Al-Daoud was deported from Michigan in June even though he had not lived in Iraq since he was an infant and didn't speak Arabic. Officials said that when he was less than a year old, his parents fled to Greece, where they applied for refugee status in the US. The status was granted, and Al-Daoud was raised in the United States.

On August 7 Michigan state representative Mari Manoogian posted a video that she said was Al-Daoud, 41, describing his dire situation roughly two weeks after he was deported.

"I begged them—I said, 'Please, I've never seen that country,'" Al-Daoud says in the clip, referring to immigration officials. "However, they forced me. . . . I'm here now. I don't understand the language. I was sleeping in the street. I'm diabetic — I take insulin shots. I've been throwing up. . . . Trying to find something to eat."

Al-Daoud, who bore what appeared to be a cross tattoo on his arm, belonged to the ancient subset of Catholicism called Chaldeans, whose historic homeland stretches from Turkey and Georgia into northern Iraq and Jordan.

Shortly after President Trump issued his controversial travel ban in 2017, Immigration and Customs Enforcement detained hundreds of Iraqis in and around Detroit, many of them Chaldeans. While approximately 800 of the roughly 1,400 Iraqis with final orders of removal have criminal records (Al-Daoud's record included disorderly conduct and larceny of a minor vehicle), many of the infractions were minor or years old. Hundreds have no criminal history at all.

Martin Manna, president of the Chaldean Community Foundation, called Al-Daoud's death "heartbreaking." Manna said he had spoken with Al-Daoud's family and was working with officials in the United States and in Iraq to return his body to Michigan

for a funeral.

“There’s a lot of anger in the community,” Manna told Religion News Service.

“We’ve had several discussions with the administration. We think now they’ll understand that this is life or death for people. We hope the president takes action like we’ve been requesting for some time.” —Religion News Service