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International conference in Brussels on October 18, 2011

Call on EU, US and UN to annul Iraqi deadline for closure of Ashraf



- **Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran:**
I warn Western governments that if you do not stop the Iraqi government's flouting of International Law and its effort to destroy Ashraf residents today, tomorrow will be too late.
- **Nontombi Tutu, Human rights activist and the daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu:**
We will not simply stand by and be silent while the people of Camp Ashraf are facing threats and the deadline of December 31st.
- **Howard Dean, Former Chairman of U.S. Democratic Party (2005-2009):**
The EU and the US need to demand that the deadline be eliminated to give us adequate time to help the people of Ashraf leave in an orderly way.
- **Senator Peter Van Rompuy, President of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq in Belgian Senate:**
I call upon the EU, the US and UN to take urgent action to make the Iraqi government cancel its deadline.
- **Gerald Kindermans, Member of Belgian Chamber of Representatives:**
Mr De Ruyt has a hard task to get Iraq to understand that they have to obey international laws and conventions and avoid harming defenseless refugees.
- **Gov. Tom Ridge, The first U.S. Homeland Security Secretary (2003-2005):**
Our credibility is at stake, President Obama. Delist the MEK and provide them the protection that we guaranteed them almost seven years ago.
- **Judge Michael Mukasey, Former U.S. Attorney General (2007-2009):**
Now it is time for us, everyone here and the US government to act. It is time to undo the deadline. It is time to delist MEK.
- **Ryszard Czarnecki, Member of the European Parliament from Poland:**
The Polish Presidency in EU has now an important task to make sure that Iraq complies with EU's demand to grant access to Amb. De Ruyt to visit Ashraf.
- **General James Conway, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps (2006-2010):**
What we need is an Iran that is envisioned by the tenets of Madam Rajavi.
- **Struan Stevenson, President of Delegation for Relations with Iraq in the European Parliament:**
They are putting every obstacle. They are trying to delay the process of interviews by the UNHCR. This is really exposing the true agenda of Nouri al-Maliki and his puppet masters in Tehran.
- **Louis Freeh, Former Director of FBI:** The threat is imminent. It is present. It has to be addressed aggressively by the United States.
- **Colonel Wesley Martin, Former commander of the Coalition's counter-terrorism in Iraq:**
Placing and holding PMOI on the list is a crime against democracy, allowing the camp to be attacked and unarmed people murdered is a sin against humanity.

International conference in Brussels

In an international conference held on Tuesday October 18 in Brussels at the invitation of Belgian Committee of Parliamentarians for a Democratic Iran, a number of representatives of the European Parliament and Belgian Parliament as well as prominent international figures from US and Europe called on EU, US and UN to take urgent action to annul suppressive deadline set by the Government of Iraq for closure of Camp Ashraf. The followings are excerpts of speeches by the panellists:

Nontombi Tutu



I know what we can do, as people, with our voices, with our marches, with our dedication to human rights. I know what it is to think that maybe the world does not care and so I come to say we are here to let the people of Camp Ashraf know that the world does care, that we are here

to also let our political representatives know that we will not simply stand by and be silent while the people of Camp Ashraf are facing threats and the deadline of December 31st.

Howard Dean



If we fail in the next 74 days, and if Prime Minister Maliki again uses our equipment and our training to murder innocent civilians, that will not only be on the heads of the Americans, it will become an election issue. I can guarantee this will become an election issue

in the US.

The governments of Europe and the United States need to demand that the deadline be eliminated to give us adequate time to help the people of Ashraf leave in an orderly way. We need to demand that Prime Minister Maliki stop interfering with the United Nations efforts to classify the people of Ashraf as refugees. We need to cut off all aid if he refuses to do so.

Senator Peter Van Rompuy



The weeks and months to come are crucial to Ashraf and its residents; therefore, I am here today to call for even more international support. More precisely, I call upon the EU, the US and the UN to take urgent action to make the Iraqi government cancel its deadline to close Camp

Ashraf by the end of this year.

I call upon the UN to station a constant monitoring team at Ashraf to secure the protection and human rights of its residents. And thirdly, I give my full support to the EU's Special Envoy, my fellow Belgian citizen Jean De Ruyt to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and to negotiate a peaceful solution.

Gerald Kindermans



I think Mr. De Ruyt has a very sensitive and hard task to tackle this humanitarian crisis and get Iraq to understand that they have to obey international laws and conventions and avoid harming defenseless refugees.

Through our activities we should get the UN engaged to prevent another military attack on Ashraf and send in a monitoring team before the end of 2011 as Iraq has set a deadline to close down the Camp which could be yet another excuse to kill the people.

Governor Tom Ridge



To my president, President Obama, I appeal in the following grounds: America has a value system embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States. We have a brand. It's about values. And one of the values must be that

we keep our word that we give to innocent, persecuted individuals around the world, and we had 3400 men and women in Camp Ashraf, who we met with individually, determined they were not terrorists and said, "We will protect you". We must keep our word. Our credibility is at stake, President Obama. Our values are at stake. Your leadership is at stake. Delist the MEK and provide them the protection that we guaranteed them almost seven years ago.

Judge Michael Mukasey



Now it is time for us, everyone here and the government of the United States to act. It is time to undo the deadline. It is time to delist MEK. It is time to unleash forces that if they were unleashed, could stop tyranny.

I join with Governor Ridge and Governor Dean in calling on my own government to act, delist MEK and send a signal to the people of Ashraf and to people all over the world that this kind of tyranny will not stand, and if we do that, then it won't.

Ryszard Czarnecki



In Poland, like in many other EU member states, a majority of MPs signed a declaration in support of Ashraf. The Polish Presidency has now an important task to make sure that Iraq complies with EU's demand to grant access to Ambassador De Ruyt to visit Ashraf.

The Iraqi government must understand that they have to choose between respecting international commitments and friendship and cooperation with Europe on one hand, or friendship with the mullahs and isolation by international community on the other hand. I wish to use this opportunity to express my full support for Mrs. Rajavi and my brothers and sisters in Ashraf.

General James Conway



It is my conviction that if we are to avoid war, the death and the destruction, the additional Horsemen of the Apocalypse that would accompany such a thing, we need an Iran that does not seek nuclear weapons. We need an Iran that does not support international terrorism, and we need an

Iran that does not murder its people on the streets. But what we do need, is an Iran that recognizes individual freedoms, allows for representative government and it will have the full intent to join with its friends and allies in the region.

What we need is an Iran that is envisioned by the tenets of Madam Rajavi.

Director Louis Freeh



The threat is imminent. It is present. It has to be addressed aggressively by the United States. It cannot be just the delisting. The simple delisting will not protect those 3,400 people in the few weeks remaining on this artificial agenda which is part of the plan in Tehran to annihilate

these people.

Today, we say again to our government that this is not a secret fact, this is not a matter which has not been given the full attention of governments including UN, and the President of United States and our Secretary have moral obligation and a duty to protect.

Struan Stevenson

I came here today having read an email that tells me the Iraqi government is still insisting on the 31st December deadline, despite the fact now that Antonio Guterres, the High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva has agreed that these people are bona-fide asylum seekers and he is trying to start the process of individual registration and interviews with every single one of them, but that process requires the cooperation of the Iraqi government.



They are putting every obstacle in his way, trying to delay the process of interviews, trying to insist that the people are not interviewed in or near Ashraf but should be taken to Baghdad for interviewing and then saying they will not guarantee their safe return to Ashraf.

This is really exposing the true agenda of Nouri al-Maliki and his puppet masters in Tehran. They have no intention of us achieving the deadline of 31st December or even any later deadline we might manage to set. They want to see the people in Ashraf annihilated.

That is their agenda, and that's why it is so important that all the messages you have heard from the talk table today, the messages praying out for action from Washington, from Brussels, from the capital cities of Europe. That's why every politician in this room has got to go out from here and spread this message fast.

The clock is ticking towards midnight. We are reaching the point of no return. And if we allow another massacre to happen, let me say this: Nouri al-Maliki has already been indicted by a Spanish judge for crimes against humanity. If he perpetrates any more violence against the people of Ashraf, he will face justice.

Colonel Wesley Martin

The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran is not a terrorist organization. That designation should never be used to appease an oppressive reactionary regime such as Iran.



The European Union and the United States and the UN must take action to prevent a third massacre.

Maliki must be forced to work with the rest of the world as pointed out; there needs to be UN protection of Ashraf and I am ready now to join that force and go back to Ashraf. The State Department must remove the PMOI from the list and the Ashraf residents must be brought out of Iraq. As mentioned, I feel when I get up here that I talk to my brothers and my sisters at Ashraf. Placing and holding PMOI on the list is a crime against democracy, allowing the camp to be attacked and unarmed people murdered is a sin against humanity.



Maryam Rajavi

I have come here, to the capital of the European Union, to tell the governments of Europe and the United States of America that the continuation of the appeasement policy of the Mullahs' regime in Iran will only lead to a catastrophe.

Silence and inaction in the face of the religious fascism ruling in Iran, is enough.

Why are you standing idly by in the face of an Iraqi government deadline for the closure of Ashraf and a repeat massacre that it could bring?

I would like to warn Western governments that if you do not stop the Iraqi government's flouting of International Law and its effort to destroy Ashraf residents today, tomorrow will be too late. I would like to warn them not to allow the praise that they won for the saving of Benghazi, to now be turned into eternal shame on the issue of Ashraf.

Now the octopus of the religious dictatorship in Iran has extended its tentacles to Washington. The United States should certainly take a lesson from this important event.

The first lesson to be learnt is from the great error of your deviation from the counter-terrorism effort. Instead of targeting the central banker of terrorism, you targeted its opposition. You, therefore, paved the way for the advance of the real terrorists.

The second lesson is that this regime will never abandon terrorism. The religious dictatorship, for lack of any support among Iranian society, because of its backward nature, due to its fundamental hostility to the democratic aspiration of Iran's women and youth, has no other foundation other than merciless suppression and export of terrorism. Indeed, the mullahs resort to terrorism to avoid collapse.

The third lesson to be learnt is that a policy of conciliation and appeasement of this terrorist and dictatorial regime is either out of folly or is a deception to justify appeasement of this regime.

Regardless of how you look at it, the fact that the mullahs' terrorism has reached Washington DC, and the fact that the regime's missiles have put Europe within range, and the fact that nuclear weapons are within this regime's reach, is a direct result of the policy of conciliation and appeasement.

The time has come to delist the resistance movement that is the victim of Western

appeasement of this regime and instead designate those who openly and clearly deny or justify this regime's terrorism and aid the terrorism machine of this regime as terrorists.

The Iranian Resistance has received evidence and intelligence from within the regime that shows the Iraqi Government, on pretext of its deadline to close Ashraf, and on orders of Khamenei is preparing to attack Ashraf. The Iraqi government is obstructing UN agencies work in resolving the Ashraf issue. They are for instance applying pressure to disrupt the work of the UNHCR in determining the refugee status of Ashraf residents. As they have already hindered and blocked the European Plan of Mr. Stevenson.

We have gathered here to ask European states and the United States of America why they are silent about the Iraqi deadline for closure of Ashraf when the aim of such a deadline is the massacre of Ashraf residents.

We say to them that you must not sit idly by in the face of this evil plot against Ashraf residents which is being advanced under the guise of the Iraqi deadline.

Extensive political, security, and economic relations with Iraq, enables Western governments to pressure the Iraqis to abide by international norms.

After the UNHCR's statement that Ashraf residents are recognized refugee seekers and have a right to fundamental protections, and after the initiative by the European High Representative on Security and Foreign Affairs, Baroness Ashton, in appointing Ambassador De Ruyt as her personal representative on the Ashraf issue, the United States and EU states must now support the special representative's mission so that he can travel to Iraq, visit Ashraf, prepare a direct report and take measures to protect Ashraf residents. They must not allow any obstruction of these efforts.

The time has come for the UN Secretary General and the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights to act to station UN monitors in Ashraf and to cancel the suppressive deadline set by the Iraqi government. The time has come for Western governments to stand alongside the Iranian Resistance that represents the will of the Iranian people for freedom, democracy, separation of religion and state, gender equality and a non-nuclear Iran.

NCRI: "Camp Ashraf should not be closed"



Source: Belgian daily La Libre, 19 October 2011
Excerpts

Iranian opposition asks the West to prevent evacuation of Ashraf refugees' camp.

On Tuesday, during a conference in Brussels where the American and European supporters of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) had gathered together, NCRI strongly criticized western governments' "appeasement" and "inaction" vis-à-vis Camp Ashraf's case. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the NCRI said: "We have gathered here to ask the European states and the United States of America why they are silent about the Iraqi deadline for closure of Ashraf when the aim of such a deadline is the massacre of Ashraf residents."

Following that, other speakers asked the three parties --the European Union, the United States, and the United Nations-- to take immediate steps in order for the Iraqi government to cancel its decision for closure of Camp Ashraf by the end of this year, or at least postpone it to a later time. This refugee camp is located in northern Iraq and has been in an unsolvable situation for years.

Shahin Gobadi, a spokesman for PMOI, stresses: "Not only camp's access to food, medical services and fuel has been limited, but also the camp's residents are under siege, just like in a prison."

Testimonies regularly describe psychological pressure and physical aggression perpetrated against Ashraf residents. Last April, an "attack" by the Iraqi armed forces resulted in the death of 36 and wounding of 300 residents.

The international mobilization concerning Ashraf faces hardheadedness of Nouri al-Maliki's government that tries to establish its authority in a country that is recently emancipated from the tutelage of the United States. The American Howard Dean, former Chairman of the Republican Party [sic – Howard Dean was Chairman of the Democratic Party] emphasized: "But the United States is morally responsible for the safety of the Ashraf residents because at the time of their disarmament, we promised to protect them."

For now, the danger is not having sufficient time. That is why the UN Secretary General is being asked to urgently interfere and immediately station a permanent UN observer force at Ashraf.

Currently a process in place regarding



the status of Ashraf residents. The UN High Commissioner of Refugees has started the interviewing and evaluation of 3,400 camp residents one by one. They all requested refugee rights. These operations should take several months, but the ultimatum announced by the Iraqi government does not provision such time.

Granting political refugee status to Ashraf residents will allow them to reside elsewhere. The goal is to have them station in any of the

"By insisting on its decision for closing the camp on December 31, 2011, the Iraqi government, under pressures exerted by the Iranian regime, is planning a human catastrophe in Ashraf."

Belgian Senator Dirk Claes

27 European Union states or other third countries. On the opposition side, it is said that it is impossible to return to Iran until a democratic government is established there.

Although the recent designation of the Belgian diplomat Jean De Ruyt by the head of Europe's diplomacy Catherine Ashton, as her personal envoy for Ashraf,

indicates EU's determination for solving this complex case; however, it will only succeed if an agreement with the UN and the US is made. In the opinion of the European Deputy Struan Stevenson, president of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq, the new envoy should "ever so expeditiously" visit the camp and convince the Iraqi government to postpone closure of the camp to a later time.

If Baghdad insists on its decision for closing the camp by the end of this year and no solutions are found by then, the lives of the residents will be in danger. Mr Gobadi says: "In order to enforce their decisions, the Iraqi officials may attack the camp to evacuate it by force." Belgian Senator Dirk Claes pointed out the behind the scene manoeuvres of Tehran for permanently ridding itself of this irritating opposition and said: "By insisting on its decision for closing the camp on December 31, 2011, the Iraqi government, under pressures exerted by the Iranian regime, is planning a human catastrophe in Ashraf."

Iranian exiles urge delay of Iraqi Camp Ashraf closure



18 October - Iranian dissidents, backed by Belgian, European and US politicians,

Tuesday urged the international community to press Iraq to postpone the closure of a camp housing thousands of outlawed Iranians.

«The US remains morally responsible for the people of Ashraf,» said former Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, referring to Camp Ashraf, home for the past 30 years to 3,400 Iranian dissidents, now facing expulsion by year's end.

«We have 74 days left until the deadline,» he told a gathering of hundreds in Brussels. «We have 74 days left until all the American troops are withdrawn and there is no protection left.»

The camp, which has become a mounting international problem, has been in the spotlight since an April raid by Iraqi security left 34 dead and scores injured, triggering sharp condemnation. Iraq wants its closure by December 31.

The camp's residents are being assessed individually by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees after applying for refugee status, to allow them to resettle elsewhere, but fears are that the process cannot be completed within the time-frame set by Baghdad.

Maryam Rajavi, who heads the National Council of Resistance of Iran, urged quick international action «to cancel the suppressive deadline set by the Iraqi government».

Last month, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton appointed an advisor to help resolve the issue and the head of a European parliament group on Iraq, MEP Struan Stevenson, said «Ambassador De Ruyt should visit Ashraf as soon as possible».