



# IRAN LIBERATION

At the behest of the Iranian regime

## Al-Maliki declares war against UN & international community, issues death warrant for residents of Ashraf

### Maryam Rajavi

President-elect of the Iranian Resistance:

Relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq is tantamount to sending them to their deaths and is a great crime planned by the Iranian regime

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### Struan Stevenson

President of European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq:

- The Iraqi Embassy in Brussels has notified the European Parliament of the position of the Iraqi Government on the issue of Camp Ashraf in a 10-point official document.
- The document is disingenuous and illegal in its entirety and amounts to a virtual declaration of war on the UN and international community and a death warrant for the residents of Ashraf.
- The document is a blatant effort to set the stage for the massacre of Ashraf residents, clearly at the behest of the Iranian regime.



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### U.S. Senate Hearing discusses Ashraf issue



Senator Carl Levin



Senator Josef Liberman



Senator Lindsey Graham



Senator John McCain

#### Senator Carl Levin, Democratic chairman of U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee:

We need to make it clear to the government of Iraq that there cannot be a repeat of the deadly confrontation begun last April by Iraqi security forces against camp Ashraf residents.

#### Senator John McCain, Ranking Republican member of U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee:

I hope that you can give us some idea as to what disposition it's going to be because I think it's very clear that the lives of these people are at risk and I thank you.

#### Senator Josef Liberman, Independent member of U.S. Senate from Connecticut:

I would add my voice, I think you [Senator Carl Levin] can speak for the Congress, members of both parties, and both houses, in expressing our concern about the safety of the people in Camp Ashraf.

#### Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican member of Senate from South Carolina:

Can you tell the people back here (families of Ashraf residents) that the likelihood of their friends and family being killed has gone up greatly because there are no American forces policing that problem?

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Statement adopted in the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), on 15 Nov. 2011 calls on the Iraqi authorities to prevent humanitarian disaster and human rights violations at Camp Ashraf.

The Committee urges the Iraqi authorities to postpone the announced deadline for the closure of Camp Ashraf (31 December 2011) so as to provide sufficient time and appropriate conditions for the UNHCR to consider, on an individual basis, all requests for refugee status filed by the residents of the Camp.

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94 leading Iraqi luminaries including state leaders, MPs and party officials call for a humane solution for Camp Ashraf and condemn the use of violence against its residents

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## ***The Iraqi Government's Declaration of War on the UN and Death Warrant for Ashraf Residents US, EU, UN's Grave Responsibility to Prevent a Humanitarian Catastrophe in Ashraf***

The Iraqi Embassy in Brussels has notified the European Parliament of the position of the Iraqi Government on the issue of Camp Ashraf in a 10-point official document. The document is disingenuous and illegal in its entirety and amounts to a virtual declaration of war on the UN and international community and a death warrant for the residents of Ashraf. It reiterates the intention to clear the camp by the end of the year, claims the 3400 residents of Ashraf are terrorists, denies that they have any status as refugees or protection under the Geneva Conventions and confirms that their continued presence is creating difficulties with neighbouring Iran. It clearly opposes attempts by the UNHCR to interview the residents and provide them with refugee status.

The document stresses that "the Iraqi government is committed to its decision to close Camp Ashraf by the end of 2011," and since resettlement "did not lead to any results because of either refusal by the inhabitants of the Camp to evacuate, or non-willingness of those States to receive them..., the Iraqi government was left with no choice but to evacuate the Camp based on the principle of sovereignty, and transfer its residents to other camps in Iraq and facilitate their travel outside Iraq during the period left from this year."

The document deliberately ignores the extensive efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), the European Union, and United States, who have bent over backwards to reach a peaceful resolution to the Ashraf issue involving the resettlement of its residents, but have been repeatedly blocked at every turn by the Iraqi Government. The document is a blatant effort to set the stage for the massacre of Ashraf residents, clearly at the behest of the Iranian regime. The UNHCR, European Parliament, US Congress, Amnesty International and other international bodies have repeatedly demanded in past months that the wholly unworkable deadline for closure of Ashraf by the end of 2011 should be extended until such time as refugee status of its residents could be affirmed by the UNHCR, enabling their safe transfer to third countries.

The 10 point document clearly shows that this a policy dictated by the Iranian regime. It explicitly states that Iraq is committed to non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring states and "the existence of this Organization however raises problems with Iran." In another part of the document it is stated, "The presence of this Organization in Iraq threatens... the security of neighboring countries and gives an excuse to neighboring countries [Iran] to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq." Article 10 of the document states, "Iraq, as a democratic and peaceful country, wants to build peaceful relations with the neighboring countries {Iran}..."

The document falsely states the reason for the closure of Ashraf to be "the Organization [PMOI] has already been classified by the international community as a terrorist organization" and "The presence of the Organization is prohibited under the Iraqi Constitution that prohibits the presence of any terrorist entity on Iraqi territory."

The letter ludicrously says, "Iraq is dealing with the residents of the camp as individuals and in accordance with the human rights principles and rules of international law enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." It appears as if the massacre of 47 residents, wounding of more than 1,000 others, the barbaric three-year siege of Ashraf, and the denial of medical facilities causing the painful death of sick and wounded patients, is according to the Iraqi Government an integral part of the principles of human rights enshrined in international law. This is quite simply a joke!

Since the letter leaves no doubt about the Iraqi government's intentions for the massacre of Ashraf residents, I find it necessary to stress the following points:

1. The international community, in particular the United States of America, the European Union, and the United Nations, must mobilise all their efforts to prevent another predictable bloodbath and a repeat of Srebrenica in Ashraf. The Iraqi government, whose hands are stained with the blood of unarmed and defenceless Iranian refugees, came to power with the help of the US and British

and other Western governments. These countries, therefore, bear an important moral responsibility in preventing this looming catastrophe

2. The international community, in particular the United States of America and the European Union, must fully support the mission of the United Nations and the UNHCR for the affirmation of Ashraf residents' refugee status and their resettlement to third countries. They must force the Iraqi government to postpone its deadline until the completion of this process. The United States in particular must prevent a great tragedy by precluding the Iraqi government from implementing the orders of the fascist dictatorship in Iran who seek the annihilation of Ashraf. If such a tragedy were to occur, the United States would bear the greatest responsibility.

3. The European Union and its High Representative, Catherine Ashton, must adopt a clear position by condemning the Iraqi deadline and any forcible relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq. EU member states should immediately accept some of the Ashraf residents, particularly the ill and wounded, and persons who have been asylum seekers or who have family relations in European countries. This would be a tangible sign that the evacuation process had begun and would make any invasion of the camp by the Iraqi authorities more difficult to accomplish under the eyes of the world's media.

4. Any promises by the Iraqi Government are worthless. A few hours prior to the start of shooting in April 2011, the residents of Ashraf received a message via the US Embassy from the Iraqi Prime Minister giving assurances that there would be no violence. When Ashraf residents are dispersed in small groups, Iraqi forces and the terrorist Iranian Qods force will torture and assassinate them without the world being informed. In such circumstances if the world stands aside and allows matters to take their course without intervening, the resident of Ashraf, including more than 1000 women, face certain death.

Struan Stevenson, MEP  
President of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq  
18 November 2011

**Maryam Rajavi:**

***Relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq is tantamount to sending them to their deaths and is a great crime planned by the Iranian regime***

***The Iranian Resistance is in no way willing to discuss relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq unless their protection in the new location is officially guaranteed by the American forces or Blue Helmets of United Nations***

NCRI, 20 Nov. 2011- Following the letter from Iraqi embassy dated 15 November to the protocol section of the European Parliament indicating that "the government of Iraq is committed to its decision to close Camp Ashraf by the end of 2011," and that "the Iraqi government was left with no choice but to evacuate the Camp based on principle of sovereignty, and transfer its residents to other camps in Iraq," Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the Iranian Resistance said:

"Relocating residents of Ashraf inside Iraq, is a Crime against Humanity and is a prelude to a grand massacre that has been devised by the Iranian theocratic fascist rulers and the government of Iraq. Forcible relocation of Ashraf residents is tantamount to sending them to their deaths and that is something they will never give in to. As it was tested in the massacre of thirty thousand political prisoners in 1988, the regime in crisis situation would not accept anything but massacre of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI). Currently the bloody annihilation of the Ashraf residents is pursued under pretext of relocation."

Mrs. Rajavi in July 28 reminded the responsibility of the United States regarding any bloodshed in Ashraf and the necessity of preventing it, and announced: "The Iranian Resistance is no longer prepared to discuss relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq in no way and at any cost unless the United States would declare that it will accept their protection utilizing American forces until resettlement to third countries."

Mrs. Rajavi added "if the United States does not want to fulfil the written commitments it signed with every Ashraf resident to protect them until the final disposition, the only acceptable option for a relocation inside Iraq is the protection of Ashraf residents by the UN Blue Helmet forces and a UN monitoring team stationed in the new location until the last resident is transferred to third countries. Otherwise, relocation inside Iraq is not acceptable to anyone, particularly for the women in Ashraf. They prefer to die in Ashraf rather than to be buried in a remote location

**I demand the international community, particularly UN member states and bodies and relevant authorities:**

**First, to categorically remove any forcible relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq from the agenda;**

**Second, the illegal and suppressive deadline of the end of 2011... should be cancelled until the end of the UNHCR's work and the transfer of all Ashraf residents to third countries;**

**Third,... the only way left to prevent a massacre of unarmed and defenseless residents, is the general affirmation of the refugee status of Ashraf residents by the UNHCR;**

**Fourth, the protection of Ashraf residents with UN blue helmet forces and the stationing of UN observers until the transfer of the last person to a third country should be facilitated and guaranteed by the UN Security Council.**

away from international attention and scrutiny. At a time when the UNHCR had declared its readiness to establish the identity of Ashraf residents, it is not clear what conspiracy is at work that Maliki is preventing the UNHCR from carrying out its process. Undoubtedly this is linked to the seven-point agreement between the mullahs' regime and Maliki's government to suppress Ashraf which was publicly announced on October 23 by the clerical regime's Foreign Ministry."

Mrs. Rajavi urged the Secretary General of the United Nations, High Commissioner for Refugees, High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNSG Representative for Iraq, as well as the U.S. President, Vice President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense and the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and all the European leaders and Foreign Ministers of member states to fulfill their legal commitments according to Article 1 of third paragraph of UN charter, International Human Rights Declaration, and paragraphs 138, 139 from final document on Responsibility to Protect "RtoP" adopted by the U.N. in 2005 and according to resolutions 1438, 1500, 2001 of the U.N. Security Council which have determined duties and frameworks of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq.

As stipulated by prominent international

jurists, United States and the United Nations bear the responsibility to protect the residents of Ashraf and this is a legal obligation.

Silence and inaction vis-à-vis a forcible relocation of Ashraf residents pave the way for another great crime against humanity which is predictable and any cooperation with regards to their forced relocation is complicity in the crime.

On the negotiations that are underway between the U.N. and the Government of Iraq regarding Ashraf, Mrs. Rajavi reminded:

1. Closure of Ashraf and relocation of the residents inside Iraq, was the demand of Khamenei since the transfer of the security of Ashraf from the U.S. forces to the Government of Iraq. The officials of the Iranian regime have reiterated this on a number of occasions.

2. During his meeting with Khamenei in Tehran on January 5, 2009, Al-Maliki "committed to close the file on the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) in an immediate timetable." In addition "The Prime Minister of Iraq assured Khamenei that Iraq takes the responsibility for final closure of the opposition PMOI's file in a timetable through international relations to transfer them to a third country in the most immediate time frame" (Al-Zaman International).

3. On February 28, 2009, during a meeting

with the President of Iraq in Tehran, Khamenei asked him and the Prime Minister of Iraq to implement the bilateral agreement for the expulsion of the PMOI from Iraq (Iranian state television).

4. On November 6, 2009, "The Prime Minister of Iraq and Iran's Speaker of Parliament underscored the need for the expulsion of the PMOI from Iraq and the Iraqi side emphasized on their removal from Iraq" (Iranian state-run news agency, Mehr).

5. In his meeting with the U.S. officials in Baghdad on March 23, 2009, Al-Maliki provided the plan to displace Ashraf residents inside Iraq (Guardian, December 15, 2010).

6. The letter of the Embassy of Iraq to the European Parliament vividly shows that the end of 2011 deadline and the massacre of civilian and defenseless Ashraf residents have been dictated by the clerical regime. In this document it has been stipulated:

- "The existence of this organization however raises problems with Iran."
- "The presence of this organization in Iraq threatens... the security of neighboring countries."
- "Iraq wants to build peaceful relations with the neighboring countries (Iran)."
- "There are many complaints against the members of this organization... Large numbers of them are wanted on Iraqi and international arrest warrants."

7. In this document, the Government of Iraq, in a brazen violation of international laws and the September 13 state of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) that declared Ashraf residents as asylum-seekers under international protection, stipulates that it recognizes no legal status for Ashraf residents. It neither considers them as refugees, nor as protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Conventions,....What the Government of Iraq that on July 2009 and April 2011 massacred Ashraf residents, and its senior officials including the Prime Minister himself, who are under investigation by the Spanish court for crime against international community, war crime, and crime against humanity, would do with persons with "no status" who would be incarcerated in barracks in various parts of Iraq?

The Government that has reneged all of its commitments, written and oral assurances to the U.S. Government and the U.N. regarding humane treatment of Ashraf residents, is not trust worthy and its current assurances are simply for neutralizing international pressures and planned massacre according to the deadline.

8. In lengthy negotiations between Ashraf

residents and the US Government and UN officials, neither the Americans nor the UN were able to present the least security guarantee to Ashraf residents after a relocation in Iraq. Why should defenseless and innocent people be sent to unknown places far from international observers inside Iraq when the main international parties cannot guarantee their protection? When the UN correctly does not allow its personnel to move about inside Iraq without total security guarantees, then with what logic can the PMOI members in Ashraf who are the main targets of the Iranian regime's terrorism be left unprotected in Iraq?

9. The imposition of relocation is in contravention of the UN Secretary General's remarks, stressed in paragraph 66 of his 7 July 2011 report to the UN Security Council in which he calls upon "Member States to help to support and facilitate the implementation of any arrangement that is acceptable to the Government of Iraq and the camp residents".

9. It is the Ashraf resident's right and indeed red line to not surrender to the religious fascism ruling Iran and its despicable dictates, and to be assured of minimum security protection until such time that they are all transferred to third countries. They have shown the utmost flexibility in past months. In May, on my request, they accepted the European Parliament plan for transfer to third countries and forsook their right of residence in a place that has been their home for 25 years. In August, they accepted the UNHCR's position despite the fact that the emergency situation in Ashraf and their 25 year history of refuge and residence in Iraq made them eligible for immediate affirmation of their refugee status. They then presented individual applications for refugee status to the UNHCR and declared their readiness for individual and private interviews.

10. Ashraf residents, in a practical solution to hasten the process of conducting the interviews in line with the UNHCR's rules, suggested a complete partitioning of a section of Ashraf to UN control and under the UN flag for the interviews. They also declared their readiness to go to interviews at any place which the UNHCR deems appropriate on condition that to avoid past cases of kidnapping, hostage-taking, bombings, or assassinations, their security be guaranteed at the same level as is customary for UN personnel and without any intervention by Iraqi forces, with guarantees for the applicant's return to Ashraf.

11. Simultaneously, the Iranian Resistance has exerted the utmost effort to transfer Ashraf residents, especially the ill and wounded, to outside Iraq and is continuing those efforts. We have conducted talks with many European and other countries in

this regard and have borne extensive costs as well. Despite all this, the Iraqi government's obstruction in the verification of the Ashraf residents' identities by the UNHCR is still continuing which reflects that government's ominous and murderous intentions to please the ruling religious dictatorship in Iran.

12. The Iraqi government tries to impose its plans on the US, UN and particularly on Mr. Kobler, the UN Secretary General's new special representative to Iraq through a campaign of demonization and misinformation. It deceitfully tries to portray the plot to relocate inside Iraq as a peaceful plan. The Iraqi government has told the US and UN that if a great number of residents leave Ashraf by the end of the year, it might reconsider the deadline. At the same time it insists that before it allows the UNHCR to begin its legal duties it must present an acceptable timetable and plan for the transfer of Ashraf residents from Iraq. This is something that is not within the UNHCR's capability or mandate. Everyone knows that the prerequisite for transfer and resettlement to third countries is affirmation of the individuals' refugee status.

13. Therefore, what the Iraqi government has done until right out of the mullahs' regime playbook and is nothing but setting the stage for another violent bloodbath. Therefore, while recalling the massacres of July 2009 and April 2011 in Ashraf which occurred in an international atmosphere of neglect of the Iranian Resistance's repeated warnings, I demand the international community, particularly UN member states and bodies and relevant authorities:

First, to categorically remove any forcible relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq from the agenda;

Second, the illegal and suppressive deadline of the end of 2011 which was invented from the start to shirk responsibility of the crimes committed on 8 April and to evade internationally called for investigations about this great crime, should be cancelled until the end of the UNHCR's work and the transfer of all Ashraf residents to third countries;

Third, as the Iraqi government is not allowing the UNHCR to start the verification of identities of Ashraf residents and the process for affirmation of their refugee status on an individual basis, the only way left to prevent a massacre of unarmed and defenseless residents, is the general affirmation of the refugee status of Ashraf residents by the UNHCR until such time that subsequent individual interviews and final status of each application is completed;

Fourth, the protection of Ashraf residents with UN blue helmet forces and the stationing of UN observers until the transfer of the last person to a third country should be facilitated and guaranteed by the UN Security Council.

## ***Iraqi Army battalions and police are preparing to attack Ashraf***



On October 31, at 11 pm, a column of Iraqi military vehicles, including at least 30 military vehicles with one column of police vehicles including 10 cars, entered from the main gate of Camp Ashraf with a lot of noise and lights on, patrolling and conducting exercises around the camp began. The suppressive battalion commander and his deputy were also in this column. Simultaneously, the mercenaries, who for the past 21 months have been engaged in psychological torture of the residents with 300 loudspeakers, increased their threats, shouts and slurs.

The intention for this suppressive exercise was on one hand preparing to attack Ashraf and on the other, to launch a psychological warfare and intimidation among the residents.

These actions were carried out following October 30th trip of Salehi, the foreign minister of the Iranian regime to Baghdad and delivering Khamenei's instructions to al-Maliki's government to defy international demands for revoking the deadline for closure of Ashraf by year end.

Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hooshyar Zebari at a joint press conference in a disgusting appeasement promised Salehi that Iraqi government would close Camp Ashraf by the end of the year.

The evening of the same day, the police chief of Diyala and Diyala operations commander went to Ashraf to oversee this exercise and also to be abreast of the necessary preparations for the November 1st show.

## ***Iranian regime unveils 7-point pact with Maliki's government against Ashraf***

Two days after the announcement of US forces' withdrawal from Iraq, the Iranian regime's Foreign Ministry announced "In order to decide on the PMOI members, with the agreement of the Iraqi government and Red Cross, arrangements were made for a trilateral committee to be established in Iraq... This trilateral committee has been established, but unfortunately the Red Cross did not attend it despite its previous commitment... The Iraqi government has prepared a 10-point draft for the expulsion of the PMOI from Ashraf and the closure of this camp. With observations from the Iranian party, this 10-point agreement evolved finally to a 7-point draft and this issue is now on the agenda for final signatures..."

Fars news agency (affiliated to IRGC) on October 23 quoted the mullahs' "Arabic and African Deputy Foreign Minister and the Chairman of Deputy Special Headquarters for Iraq in Foreign Ministry" added.

"There are observations between the governments of Iran and Iraq on how to officially announce this issue through the media, and this matter remains under consideration for implementation."

## ***Iraqi Prime Ministry intensifies pressures and inhumane siege on Ashraf***

Despite international protest, Iraqi government insists on its suppressive and illegal deadline to close Ashraf at the end of 2011. It has intensified its pressures and suppressive measures which are all examples of crime against humanity and breach of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

1- During recent three weeks, the Iraqi forces have obstructed the transfer of urgent patients who needed urgent treatment or surgery to Baquba and Baghdad Hospitals. For example they have obstructed several times transfer of 4 women residents who had surgery appointments in Baghdad.

On Wednesday November 16, Iraqi forces declared that the committee for suppression of Ashraf in the office of prime minister has ordered the prohibition of transfer of patients to Baghdad. Two of these women have waited several months for their surgery appointment and as they strongly suffered with their pains, they should be operated to replace their joints. One of these women is at the verge of losing her sight and her eyes should be operated and the fourth patient suffered strongly from her spinal column.

During three years, several Ashraf residents of Ashraf have lost their lives because of medical siege of Ashraf. Prohibition of entry of specialist doctors, medicines and medical equipments to Ashraf as well as transfer of patients especially women to hospital

can be considered as war crime and crime against humanity and the responsible of these crimes can be pursued and punished.

2- On Thursday morning 17 November, by instructions of committee of suppression even entry of fuel for central electricity generator of Ashraf that is actually occupied by Iraqis was prohibited. This station provides the electricity of Ashraf to replace the main electricity. Actually there is a lack of electricity in all cities of Iraq.

3- In order to intensify inhuman pressures, the committee of suppression of Ashraf has imposed further restrictions to use this station that is entirely made and funded by the PMOI. The Iraqi forces have reduced the hours that this station can be used in daytime and at night when there is shortage of electricity this station does not work so the residents have not use their facilities to warm themselves. In addition, despite wintertime, they do not even let entry of coal and wood to Ashraf, therefore the residents are under pressure.

4- Two months after passing of Ms. Zahra Mehrsefat, a member of the leadership council of the PMOI and a member of the NCRI, despite Islamic traditions and humanitarian and ethical principals, the Iraqis refuse to deliver her body to her relatives at Ashraf. These criminals even misuse the body of a member of PMOI to exert pressure on her comrades and her relatives.

## **US Congress Foreign Affairs Committee approves amendment that calls for protection of Ashraf residents**

On November 2, 2011, members of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee both Republicans and Democrats unanimously approved an amendment to a bill that calls to protect the 3400 Ashraf residents. The Bill is designed to impose yet harder sanctions on the Iranian regime.

The amendment asks the Obama administration to pressure Iraq to ensure the well-being of Ashraf residents and to prevent the involuntary return of them to their country of origin, Iran, where they will face certain death.

The amendment also urges the Government of Iraq to postpone closure of Ashraf until the UNHCR completes its process and the residents are resettled in third countries.

### **AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE TO H.R. 1905 OFFERED BY MR. POE OF TEXAS**

**(C) FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that—

(1) an increase in both the quantity and quality of Iranian arms shipments and technological expertise to the Iraqi insurgents, the Taliban, other terrorist organizations and criminal elements has the potential to significantly change the battlefield in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and lead to a large increase in United States, International Security Assistance Force, Coalition and Iraqi and Afghan casualties; and

(2) an increase in Iranian activity and influence in Iraq threatens the safety and welfare of the residents of Camp Ashraf.

**(d) STATEMENT OF POLICY.**—It shall be the policy of the United States to urge the Government of Iraq to

(1) uphold its commitments to the United States to ensure the continued well-being of those individuals living in Camp Ashraf,

(2) prevent the involuntary return of such individuals to Iran in accordance with the United States Embassy Statement on Transfer of Security Responsibility for Camp Ashraf of December 28, 2008; and

(3) not close Camp Ashraf until the United Nations High Commission for Refugees can complete its process, recognize as political refugees the residents of Camp Ashraf who do not wish to go back to Iran, and resettle them in third countries.

## U.S. Senate Hearing discusses Ashraf issue

### Witnesses:

U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta  
Chairman of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff,  
General Martin Dempsey

On 15 November 2011, a hearing was held at the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on "Iraq Security Issues."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey testified at the hearing. U.S. Senators expressed concerns about the Iranian refugees at Camp Ashraf in Iraq. Supporters and family members of Ashraf residents wearing yellow T-shirts with signs that read "protect Ashraf," took part in the hearing. The following is excerpts of the text of the hearing:



Snapshot of the live report by C-Span3 Channel from the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on 15 November 2011 shows the supporters and members of families of Ashraf residents wearing yellow T-shirts with signs that read "Protect Ashraf."

### Sen. Carl Levin:

The status of the residents of Camp Ashraf from the Iranian dissident group remains unresolved. As the December 2011 deadline approaches, the administration needs to remain vigilant that the government of Iraq lives up to its commitments to provide for the safety of Camp Ashraf residents until a resolution of their status can be reached. We need to make it clear to the government of Iraq that there cannot be a repeat of the deadly confrontation begun last April by Iraqi security forces against camp Ashraf residents.

### Sen. Lindsey Graham:

Do you think the people at camp Ashraf are going to get killed? What is going to happen to them?

### Gen. Dempsey:

As you know the State Department is leading an effort to ensure that the....

### Sen. Lindsey Graham:

Can you tell the people back here that the likelihood of their friends and family being killed has gone up greatly because there are no American forces policing that problem?

### Gen. Dempsey:

I won't say anything to those people because I am not involved in the outcome.

### Senator McCain:

Could I just say finally on the issue of Camp Ashraf, I know Secretary of State is addressing this issue but it is American troops that are protecting them now. I hope that you can give us some idea as to what disposition it's going to be because I think it's very clear that the lives of these people are at risk and I thank you.

### Sen. Carl Levin:

I appreciate that. Well just on that point, to turn it into a question and may General this needs to be addressed too. There's obviously a greater risk there unless, unless Iraqis keep a commitment. What's going to be done to make sure to the best of our ability that they keep that commitment, and what about the question of removing them from the list, not them but the organization, from the terrorist list? ...We're all concerned about them.

### Gen. Dempsey:

#### Sen. Carl Levin:

*Just assure the Iraqis that there is a real strong feeling around here that if they violate their commitment to protect those people... And they violate that commitment to us, it is going to ... severely negatively impact their relationship with the US Congress.*

#### Sec. of Defense Panetta:

*Senator I want to assure you that Ambassador Jeffrey has made that point loud and clear to the Iraqis.*

No, and we share your concern, Lloyd Austin shares the concern and I know Ambassador Jeffrey shares the concern and we're not sparing any diplomatic effort to encourage the Iraqis to do what we think is right in this regard to ensure the protection of those folks in Camp Ashraf. But right now actually the Iraqi security forces guard Camp Ashraf with our Advisory and Assistance group with them, and so the concern when we do leave that capacity is a real one. But I actually

think we've got to put the pressure on the Iraqi government diplomatically to have the outcome we think is correct.

### Sen. Carl Levin:

Just assure them if you would that there's a real strong feeling around here that if they violate their commitment to protect those people assuming they're still there and haven't been removed from the terrorist list. And if they violate that commitment to us that is going to have a severely negative impact on the relationship between... and I think I can speak here for the Congress, although I'm reluctant to ever say that, I think there is a lot of concern in the Congress about it, and this in my opinion will severely negatively impact their relationship with the US Congress. Let me leave it at that.

### Sec. Panetta:

Senator I want to assure you that Ambassador Jeffrey has made that point loud and clear to the Iraqis.

### Senator Lieberman:

I'd add my voice, I think you can speak for the Congress, members of both parties, and both houses, in expressing our concern about the safety of the people in Camp Ashraf. You know this is one of a series of what I call "What ifs" which have different answers now that we're dealing with a sovereign Iraq and we're going to be relying on, I suppose this is true whether we had troops in Iraq or not or outside in the neighborhood, we're going to be relying on diplomacy, cajoling them... What if there is victimization, attacks on the people at Camp Ashraf.

## US House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

*"With respect to Camp Ashraf, which we deeply are concerned about, we know that there is an ongoing and very legitimate expression of concern."*

*"We are pushing very hard to get the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to work with residents of Camp Ashraf and Government to get them to a safe place."*

On 27 October, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was at a Congressional hearing of Foreign Affairs Committee of US Congress. Several Members asked about the situation of Camp Ashraf and the delay in delisting of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran from the FTO list. Following is part of Congressional hearing :

**Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen:** Many members including the ranking member and I had sought the administration's commitment to securing their protection given the Iraqi government's repeated failure to comply with its international human rights obligations to the Camp Ashraf residents and in light of President Obama's announcement of the final withdraw of American troops from Iraq, we need to be confident that our administration is engaged with the government of Iraq, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and others to ensure the welfare of Camp Ashraf residents and to resolve their long-term security goals.

**Secretary Clinton:** With respect to Camp Ashraf, which we deeply are concerned about, we know that there is an ongoing and very legitimate expression of concern. We have elicited written assurances from government of Iraq that it will treat Ashraf residents humanely, that it will not transfer the residents to a country that they may have reasons to fear. And we are pushing very hard to get the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to work with residents of Camp Ashraf and Government to get them to a safe place.

...

**Rep. Sherman:** I think many of us saw this ad about Camp Ashraf featuring a 14-year-old girl who fears extermination. We face a tough circumstance and that we are withdrawing from Iraq. In the past there have been some will say massacre but

*"We are also going to move as expeditiously as possible to a final resolution on the designation."*

at least terrible instances in which tens of people have been killed. And there are press reports that the Iraqi officials say well don't worry about it too much after all these folks are on the US terrorist list. What are we doing to assure that when we leave Iraq we will not see the massacre of 3400 people at Camp Ashraf? And how is it going

on the court-ordered review on whether the MEK should be on the terrorist list?

**Secretary Clinton:** On those points in particular congressman in accordance with the DC circuit's 2010 ruling, State Department is reviewing the designation. There will be a decision. It has to be done expeditiously but thoroughly and we hope to have



such a decision in the future. I would add that the current designation does not pose a bar to the resettlement of Ashraf residents in Europe. And the humanitarian situation at Ashraf in our opinion is also not related to the MEK's designation. And I think it's also important to recognize that, you know, we need to do as much as we can to move as many people out of the camp before the end of the year and we are trying to do that.

We are working primarily through the United Nations and certainly with both the residence of Ashraf and the government of Iraq to try to put in place a very rapid assessment of individuals and we have urged the EU and other countries to favorably consider the resettling of any Ashraf resident granted refugee status because we want to shrink the numbers as best we can.

...

**Rep. Rohrabacher:** You stated that we are going to do as much as we can in terms of Camp Ashraf. You're not doing as much as you can. It's

been 500 days since the court has ordered us to reconsider this terrorist designation and that should be plenty of time to understand what the issues are. And other people around the world now have determined that they don't put them on the terrorist list. So we are not doing as much as we can. And I would hope that you take that up and do as much as you can to ensure there's not another massacre of people there that we could have prevented. Let's note that we have officially requested the State Department for information about the Camp Ashraf massacre. Do you intend to comply with that request as we've been told the State Department will or are you backtracking from a commitment?

**Secretary Clinton:** Congressman, we will provide that what information we can to you.

**Rep. Rohrabacher:** "We can" sounds like the operative words of how to get out of answering a question. You obviously have the records of your own Department. Are you going to provide

*"We are working primarily through the UN and certainly with both the residence of Ashraf and the government of Iraq to try to put in place a very rapid assessment of individuals and we have urged the EU and other countries to favorably consider the resettling of any Ashraf resident granted refugee status."*

it? You have a request from Congress you agreed to do it. And will comply with that request?

**Secretary Clinton:** We certainly will comply with the request.

**Rep. Rohrabacher:** Ok, thank you.

**Secretary Clinton:** But I cannot tell you what will be in the reply that is the provocation of my answer.

**Judge Poe:** Thank you Madam Secretary, thank you Madam Chair. I will try to make this to the point.

Last time you and I talked in this very room, we talked about the safety of Camp Ashraf. That was in March and then later in April, Iraqi soldiers came in and killed people in Camp Ashraf. People disagree on how that occurred but people did that. Right now, on 31st [December] United States is leaving, I am not discussing that, but

also on 31st, Maleki has made it clear that the camp is going to close. When we were in Iraq this summer, Chairman Rohrabacher, myself and others on this committee, we met with Maliki on the issue of Camp Ashraf. It got very heated. We wanted to go see the camp, he refused to let us see it. And later, we learned when we were flying

around in a Black Hawk, that we have been invited to leave the country based upon that discussion with him. But the number one thing he said about the way Iraq treated Camp Ashraf was the US designation of the MEK.

He spent all of his time saying this is the reason they are treated the way they are because you, the United States, have designated them as a foreign terrorist organization.

My concern, first of all, is the safety of the people in Camp Ashraf when that 31st comes. They are in fear. 85 of those people some are Americans and the others of that 85 that are there among the 2000, are permanent residents of the US. So, my question is, what are we doing through the end to make sure they extend the deadline so the people can do what is necessary through the UN to get out of Iraq and go somewhere in the world. And second, the long term issue of the MEK designation. I am encouraged by your words last night that you made regarding that. So, those are my two issues and my two questions to you Madam Secretary.

**Secretary Clinton:** Well, congressman, I can assure you that I am personally very focused on trying to make sure that we protect the safety of the residents of the camp. I, and our department and our administration strongly condemned the violence that led to the deaths. Regardless of how that happened, the fact is, you

*"I can assure you that I am personally very focused on trying to make sure that we protect the safety of the residents of the camp. I, and our department and our administration strongly condemned the violence that led to the deaths. Regardless of how that happened, the fact is, you are right, 36 residents died because of the violence on April the 8th. We are monitoring the situation as closely as we can."*

*"We do have written assurances from the government of Iraq to treat the Ashraf residents humanely, to follow their international obligations which they have, as long as the residents remain in the country, and not to transfer anyone to any country where that person could be persecuted as a result of their political or religious beliefs. And so, we are trying to nail down as much as we can to provide some protective screen for the residents."*



are right, 36 residents died because of the violence on April the 8th. We are monitoring the situation as closely as we can.

We see no evidence suggesting that there is any other imminent attack on Ashraf and we continue to urge the government of Iraq to show restraint. As I said earlier, we do have written assurances from the government of Iraq to treat the Ashraf residents

humanely, to follow their international obligations which they have, as long as the residents remain in the country, and not to transfer anyone to any country where that person could be persecuted as a result of their political or religious beliefs. And so, we are trying to nail down as much as we can to provide some protective screen for the residents. We know that they have approached; that we have also pushed the UNHCR to have even more of a presence, to do more, to try to move as many of the status determinations as they can. So this is an area of deep concern to us and we are moving on many fronts and we are also going to move as expeditiously as possible to a final resolution on the designation.

**Judge Poe:** Do we have any time frame on the designation?

**Secretary Clinton:** I cannot be more specific than that congressman, as expeditiously as possible.

**Judge Poe:** Well, I just want to re-urge you and the administration to make sure that when December 31 comes, bad things do not happen to those good folks in Camp Ashraf. And all of the politics, when you would set them aside, fulfill our obligations [just as we asked them] to put their weapons down as MEK, they did; and they get refugee and asylum status somewhere in the world but their safety is paramount. I'd just re-urge that Madam Secretary.

**Secretary Clinton:** I appreciate your urging, I appreciate the concerns and I take them very seriously sir.

## Press Release

### *With the end of 2011 approaching*

### **94 leading Iraqi luminaries including state leaders, MPs and party officials call for a humane solution for camp Ashraf and condemn the use of violence against its residents**

As we approach the final months of 2011, how Iraq deals with the situation in camp Ashraf has become an important factor with which the international community measures Iraq's obligation to international law and human rights. Various international organizations, including the UN and UNHCR, have called for extension of the deadline to close camp Ashraf and have recognized the residents of the camp as protected persons under international law. Additionally, many Iraqi MPs and luminaries have added their voices to the campaign calling for the basic human rights of camp residents to be respected as asylum seekers protected by the 4th Geneva Convention; expressing their opposition to any attempt to bend to foreign pressures which are aimed at harassing the residents as well as any aggression, use of force or massacre, under any pretext, against them; similar to what happened in July of 2009 and April of 2011.

In a separate initiative, 85 Iraqi MPs wrote a letter to the High Commissioner for refugees urging him to intervene in extending the government set deadline, as well as for UN protection of camp Ashraf. Fearing the negative implications of this policy on our country's reputation and to stop Iraq from being hauled into another crisis; once again, we insist that the UN should assume responsibility for protection of camp Ashraf and the work initiated by UNHCR - to process the status of residents - should be expedited.

Statements by Iraqi figures who have called for respecting the rights of camp Ashraf are as follows:

- In an open letter to Maliki, Dr. Ayad Alawi, head of the Al Iraqia bloc stressed; you could have asked for the UN to intervene and provide an alternate solution. I say for Iraq's sake; what was perpetrated against Ashraf residents; the way they were killed, was neither righteous nor fair (Al Iraqia Web Site)
- Dr. Saleh Mutlak, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister: their (camp Ashraf residents) presence in Iraq is in accordance with the law. They are asylum seekers and are protected by the 4th Geneva Convention. Any attempt to relocate them against their will is against international law and tantamount to succumbing to foreign pressure. By setting a deadline and saying either leave by this date or we'll spill your blood, we're only drag the country into another conflict with the international community and this is not right. I believe

that this decision should not be in the hands of one single person; it should rather be a collective Iraqi decision and anyone wanting to make a decision regarding this matter, must consider Iraq's reputation first. Seeing that they are our guests and we should not treat them as they've been treated. (Babelia TV- NINA)

- Tareq al-Hashemi, Iraqi Vice President: MEK's presence in Iraq is a legal presence. We condemn the government's way of handling this issue. Their presence in Iraqi territories is in accordance with international law and as such, this crisis can only be resolved by the international community. (Al Sharghia TV)

- Dr. Zafir al-Ani, a leading figure from Al Iraqia and Secretary General of Iraq's National Future Assembly: The illegal deadline to close camp Ashraf at the end of 2011 must be cancelled. And as per demands by the UNHCR, the government of Iraq, by annulling its deadline, must do all necessary cooperation with the UN, EU and other international organizations in order to find a fair and legal solution. (AL Malaf)

- Salman al-Jumaili, head of Al-Iraqia's parliamentary bloc: We believe the issue of Ashraf residents has to be resolved consistent with international laws. These refugees have to be treated according to international laws and this case should not be exploited as a pressure point in our relations with Iran. (Al Sharghia TV)

- Maison al-Damlougi, Spokeswoman for al-Iraqiya: Forcible relocation of Ashraf residents, which the Iraqi government seeks to carry out by year's end, is inconsistent with the concepts of human rights and has been condemned. (AL Zaman Daily)

- Dr. Salim Abdullah al-Jabouri, head of the parliament's human rights commission: Time should not be used as an additional factor for exerting pressure with regard to the case of camp Ashraf. It also requires adherence to international standards and respect for human rights in dealing with this case. (AKA News)

- Dr. Ahmad al-Awani, head of the parliament's commerce commission: Relocation of Ashraf residents, who are members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, is a calculated foreign plot. (NINA)

- Mahmood Osman, independent MP from Kurdish bloc called for showing respect to the residents of Ashraf, refrain from attacks against them and protection of their properties. (INA)



- Dr. Abdunnasser al-Mahdawi, governor of Diyala province called for implementation of the initiative offered by the European Parliament with regard to the case of camp Ashraf. He also emphasized the necessity to protect Ashraf residents and refrain from violating their rights. (Governor's Web Site- NINA)

- Falah al-Naqib, MP and former Minister of Interior stressed that the issue of camp Ashraf a humanitarian issue and we should help and protect these refugees because they are our guests and the pressures exerted upon them is not just. (Al Zaman Daily)

- Adil Barwari, advisor to the Prime Minister in Kurdish affairs expressed hopes that the Iraqi government will consider the humanitarian aspects in dealing with the case of camp Ashraf. (NINA)

- Dr. Ala'a Maki, MP: As we all know, the residents of Ashraf are protected under international laws and all decisions by international organizations regarding their case must be carried out. (Al Malaf)

- Alia Nusayif, Member of Parliament: the government's failure to react to international calls regarding extension of Ashraf residents' presence in Iraq beyond the year's end is regrettable. She also explained that a concrete solution does not have to be within a specific timeframe. It rather needs an extended period for the involved parties to achieve positive and suitable results. (INA)

- Mohsen Saadoun, deputy chairman of the Kurdish parliamentary bloc: The solution for the situation in camp Ashraf is through negotiations under the supervision of UN; and the right of political asylum has been guaranteed for everyone. He added that the presence of such great number of refugees has to be in accordance with Iraq's constitution, which underlines the necessity to respect human rights. He urged for an appropriate solution regarding their departure from Iraq. (INA- NINA)

- Latif Mustafa, MP from the Progress parliamentary bloc: The government of Iraq has to consider them (residents of Ashraf) as asylum seekers who have political aspirations. International laws compel Iraq to respect political refugees for as long as they remain committed to international covenants. According to Iraq's constitution and international laws, none of the refugees should be forcibly expelled to another country or extradited. (INA-NINA)

- Arkan Zebari, MP, foreign affairs



Dr. Zafir Al-Ani



Tareq al-Hashemi



Dr. Ayad Alawi



Dr. Saleh Al Mutlak



Dr. Osama Al Nagafee

commission: The residents of Ashraf enjoy the status of "international protection" for they are refugees and have the right to benefit from human rights.(Al Malaf)

• Dr. Bakhari Abdullah noted that the international community will not tolerate the compulsory evacuation of camp Ashraf by the government of Iraq at the end of the year.( Al Zaman Daily)

• Shwan Mohamad Taha, MP from the Kurdish bloc: A raid on Ashraf residents, aimed to forcibly relocate them by the end of the year, would be unacceptable in the new democratic Iraq.(Baghdad Daily)

• Mesal al-Osi, former MP and head of Iraq's Peoples Party: residents of camp Ashraf have political asylum and our government should honor its obligations.(INA)

• Sheikh Abdullah Ojail al-Yavar, Head of the Front for Justice & Reform in Iraq: residents of camp Ashraf are in Iraq based on international conventions and they should not be harmed .(Al Malaf)

• Ala Talebani, MP from the Kurdish bloc: Our government is now dealing with a group of asylum seekers who are on Iraqi soil based on international conventions and in light of the political difficulties Iran is causing; we should support them.(Baghdad Daily)

• Majed Ismael Mohammed, MP from the Kurdish bloc, urged the Iraqi government should not resort to force in dealing with the refugees, irrespective of their political tendencies.(Al Malaf)

• Haider Mullah, Rapporteur for the Iraqi parliament's Human Rights Commission: we consider any attempt at putting an end to the presence of camp Ashraf residents in Iraq by year's end as meddling into Iraq's internal affairs and we condemn it; as this case is an Iraqi case in addition to having an international dimension and it must be resolved accordingly. As such, we warn that no decision should be made without coordination with UNAMI and UNHCR.( Al Zaman Daily)

- Dr. Ayad Alawi, Head of Al Iraqia

- Dr. Osama Al Nagafee, Speaker of parliament

- Dr. Saleh Al Mutlak, Deputy Prime Minister

-Tareq al-Hashemi, Iraqi Vice President

-Dr. Salman al-Jumaili, head of al-Iraqiya's parliamentary bloc

- Dr. Jamal Al Karbuli, Head of Parliamentary Group

- Dr. Zafir Al-Ani, a leading figure from al-Iraqiya

- Mahmood Osman, independent MP from Kurdish bloc

- Mohsen Saadoun, deputy chairman of the Kurdish parliamentary bloc

- Falah al-Naqib, MP and former Minister of Interior

- Maison al-Damlouji, MP and Al Iraqia Spokeswoman

- Dr. Salim Abdullah al-Jabouri, head of the parliament's human rights commission

-Dr. Ahmad al-Awani, head of the parliament's commerce commission

- Haider al-Mulla, Rapporteur for the Parliamentary council on Human Rights and official Al Iraqia spokesman

- Rasem al-Avadi, leading figure from al-Iraqiya

- Hussam al-Azawi, former MP and head of Al Iraqia in Diyala

- Arshad Arkan Zebari, member of parliament's foreign affairs commission

- Dr. Ala'a Maki, MP from Al Iraqia bloc

- Ms. Atab Jsem al-Dori, Al Iraqia MP

- Mohammed Osman al-Khaldi, Al Iraqia MP

- Alia Nusayjif, Member of Parliament

- Ms. Shaza al-Abosi, former MP

- Eskandar Watwat, Al Iraqia MP

- Dr. Bokhari Abdullah, former MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Shwan Mohamad Taha, MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Dr. Mostafa al-Hitti, former MP

- Mesal al-Osi, former MP and head of Iraq's Peoples Party

- Sheikh Abdullah Ojail al-Yavar, Al head of the front for Justice & Reform in Iraq

- Omar Khalaf, Al Iraqia MP

- Vahdat al-Jomaili, Al Iraqia MP

- Qais Shazar, Al Iraqia MP

- Ojeil Al Yawar, Al Iraqia MP

- Othman Al Joheishi, Al Iraqia MP

- Ziyad Tareq Zarb, Al Iraqia MP

- Fares al-Sanjari, Al Iraqia MP

- Raad Al Dehlaki, Al Iraqia MP

- Khalil Zaidan, Al Iraqia MP

- Dr. Faezeh al-Obaidi, Al Iraqia MP

- Ms. Jale Younis, Al Iraqia MP

- Ahmad Al-Mesari, Al Iraqia MP

- Adnan al-Danbos, Al Iraqia Former MP

- Falah Hassan Zaidan, Al Iraqia MP

Haider al-Mulla

Official Al Iraqia spokesman for the bloc

Rapporteur for the Parliamentary Human Rights commission

November 16, 2011

- Nahede al-Daeni, Al Iraqia MP

- Dr. Neda al-Jabori, Al Iraqia MP

- Ala Talebani, MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Entesar alawi, leading member National Accord Movement(NAM)

- Ziya Shekhli, leading member NAM

- Abd Sattar Baer, leading member NAM - Ayatallah Ayad Jamal a'din, former MP

- Dr. Abdul Nasser al-Mahdawi, governor of Diyala

- Adil Barwari, advisor to the Prime Minister in Kurdish affairs

- Sardar Abdullah, MP from the Kurdish Progressive Bloc

- Azhar Shekhli, Al Iraqia MP

- Taha Al Luhayby, Former MP

- Akram Naqib, Al Iraqia legal advisor

- Ms. Karima al-Javari, Al Iraqia MP

- Ibrahim al- Mutlak, Al Iraqia MP

- Mohammed Eqbal, Al Iraqia MP

- Mohammed Karboli, Al Iraqia MP

- Hani Ashur, Al Iraqia legal advisor

- Ms. Sohad al-Obaidi, Al Iraqia MP

- Hamed al-Mutlak, Al Iraqia MP

- Yasin al-Mutlak, Al Iraqia MP

- Sheikh Jamal al-Bat'tikh, former minister and MP

- Farzand Ahmed, former MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Latif Mustafa, MP from the Change parliamentary bloc

- Bayazid Hassan, MP from the Change parliamentary bloc

- Sheikh Majed Ismael, MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Sheikh Azad Abu Bakr, MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Latif Hoj Hassan, former MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Dr. Hamid Adel Bavi, MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Dr. Mohammed Ahmed, former MP from the Kurdish bloc

- Yousif Ahmed, former MP, Kurdish bloc

- Fattah Sheikh, former MP

- Dr. Mohammed Shekhli, Director, National Justice Center

- Minas Ibrahim al-Yousifi, Secretary General of the Christian Democratic Party

- Abdullah Kazim, spokesman for the Vice President Tareq Hashemi

- Loei Saeidi, leading member National Accord Movement(NAM)

- Sheikh Khalaf al-Alyan, Secretary General of the Iraqi Reconciliation Council

- Qahtan Saeidi, leading figure from the Iraqi Liberal Movement

- Ibrahim Bajalan, former chair of Diyala Provincial Council

- In addition to 13 provincial council members and advisors to governors

## Concerns for the 3,500 PMOI members living in Camp Ashraf



Geneva, 2nd April 2009. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) is deeply concerned

that around 3,500 members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition group, living in Camp Ashraf, in Iraq, may be expelled from Iraq as, according to the latest information received, the Iraqi security forces have surrounded the Camp to prevent people from entering or exiting. This event follows several statements by both Iranian and Iraqi officials that the PMOI should be expelled from Iraq and the camp closed. OMCT considers that those living in Camp Ashraf, having left Iran for political reason, to escape persecution and to organise resistance against the Iranian regime, would be at grave risk of torture or other serious human rights violations if they were to be returned involuntarily to Iran. OMCT therefore calls on Iraq to strictly abide by the principle of non-refoulement that prohibits sending a person to a country where there are serious reasons for believing that he or she would be subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment. OMCT also would like to recall that it has been recognised from the beginning of the conflict that PMOI members are not involved in the confrontation between Americans and Iraqis. In addition, since PMOI members living in the camp have been disarmed, they have been designated as "protected persons" under Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of which guarantees were clearly stipulated in various protocols signed with United States (US) forces.

From autumn 2008, and due to the rapprochement between some Iraqi governmental factions and Iranian authorities, fears were expressed regarding the guarantees provided to the PMOI members if the US were to transfer the protection of the camp to the Iraqi authorities without ensuring beforehand that the latter could indeed guarantee this protection.

On 1st January 2009, the US transferred to the Iraqi Government the responsibility for the protection of Ashraf, reportedly on the basis of guarantees it was said to have received from the Iraqi Government. Since then, fears have been reiterated both as a result of the pressures exerted by Iran upon the Iraqi Government and as a consequence of measures undertaken by the Iraqi authorities, in particular in the framework of the transfer of responsibility for controlling the persons who enter and exit the camp from the Mojahedin to Iraqi officials. In view of the latest events, OMCT calls upon the US authorities to take the necessary steps to ensure the effective protection of Ashraf residents.

## Prevent humanitarian disaster and human rights violations at Camp Ashraf



Strasbourg, 15.11.2011 - In a statement adopted today at its meeting in Paris, the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), calls on the Iraqi authorities to prevent humanitarian disaster and human rights violations at Camp Ashraf:

*"The Committee is concerned about the situation of the residents of Camp Ashraf (also referred to as Camp New Iraq), who are at risk of facing violent expulsion by the Iraqi security forces.*

*The Camp is home for about 3,400 Iranians who oppose the current regime in their country. The Iraqi Government has announced its decision to close the Camp definitively by the end of 2011, and has ordered its residents to resettle to another site in Iraq, or to return to Iran.*

*The Iraqi authorities have already tried, on several occasions, to enter the Camp by force and to push its residents out. On 8 April 2011, an attack on the Camp resulted in more than 30 people being killed and over 300 being injured.*

*The UNHCR is now considering individual requests for refugee status from the residents of Ashraf. As each case is being studied individually, this work requires considerable time and will not be completed before the deadline set by the Iraqi authorities.*

*As this deadline comes closer, there are growing fears among the international community that a new attempt to expel the residents of Ashraf by force might turn into a large-scale massacre.*

*The Committee urges the Iraqi authorities to postpone the announced deadline for the closure of Camp Ashraf (31 December 2011) so as to provide sufficient time and appropriate conditions for the UNHCR to consider, on an individual basis, all requests for refugee status filed by the residents of the Camp.*

*We encourage Council of Europe member and observer states to consider positively the resettlement demands of those Ashraf residents who are duly recognised by the UNHCR as refugees."*

### URGENT ACTION

#### IRANIAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN IRAQ AT RISK



Over 3,000 Iranian asylum-seekers living in a camp in Iraq are at serious risk of egregious human rights violations, including forcible return to Iran. The Iraqi authorities plan to close down the camp, which has previously been attacked several times by Iraqi security forces resulting in the death and injury of dozens of people.

The Iraqi authorities have publicly announced their plans to close Camp New Iraq, formerly known as Camp Ashraf, 60 kilometres north of Baghdad, on 31 December this year. The camp is home to some 3,250 Iranian asylumseekers who have lived in Iraq for some 25 years. The Iraqi government has repeatedly stated its opposition to the continued existence of the camp. The camp has been attacked several times by Iraqi security forces, most recently in April 2011, causing the deaths of dozens of residents and injuries to others. Camp residents are concerned that excessive force will be used again if plans to close the camp go ahead. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced in a statement on 13 September 2011 that it had received a high number of asylum requests from the camp residents and was putting in place a process to determine them on an individual basis. In the same statement the UN Refugee Agency highlighted the importance of conducting asylum interviews with the camp residents in a neutral, safe and confidential location.

**Amnesty International is urging the Iraqi government to extend the deadline for the closure of the camp in order to allow adequate time for UNHCR to determine all asylum claims it has received from Camp New Iraq residents.**

