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REMARKS BY RANKING MEMBER ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Press Conference on Camp Ashraf
March 17, 2010

It is a pleasure to join my colleagues today and so many Iranian-American friends to raise awareness about the situation in Camp Ashraf.

The United States of America is the beacon of human rights and freedom for people around the world. Through our actions and our example, we have helped spread the blessings of liberty to hundreds of millions of people. And so it is all the more important that our nation uphold the commitments we have made regarding human rights.

We have committed to humanitarian protections for the residents of Camp Ashraf in Iraq.

When we transferred responsibility for the security of Ashraf to the Iraqi Government, we sought – and received – Iraqi assurances that the residents would be treated humanely.

However, repeated actions by the Iraqi security forces have called those guarantees into question.

In the face of such behavior, the U.S. is obligated to take all necessary and appropriate steps to uphold our commitments and ensure that the Ashraf residents are treated humanely and are not forcibly returned to Iran.

That is why I have cosponsored House Resolution 704, and why the majority of my fellow Members of Congress have joined me in supporting this important legislation.

I would like to thank my distinguished colleague from California, Mr. Filner, for authoring this resolution, and I join him in calling for this resolution to go to the House Floor in a timely manner.

We must send a clear message to the residents of Camp Ashraf that the U.S. Congress stands with them.

I'd also like to take a moment to look at the bigger picture.

Unfortunately, innocent Iranians have spent over three decades under the repression of the radical Islamist regime in Tehran.

We will soon celebrate Nowruz, the Iranian New Year. Nowruz literally means "new day." I hope that this Nowruz will be a new day for human rights and freedom for the people of Iran.