MPs Warn UN on ominous intentions of Government of Iraq on Iranian dissidents

Friday, 25 November 2011

BPCIF: More than 150 cross party MPs and Peers have condemned the Iraqi government's intention to forcefully close Camp Ashraf (home to Iranian dissidents for over 25 years) at the end of this year. They warn about the massacre of 3,400 residents including 1000 women in the camp. So far Iraqi forces, under the command of Iraqi PM Nouri al-Maliki, have killed 47 of these defenceless and unarmed refugees and injured hundreds of others in two deadly assaults at the behest of the Iranian regime.

Lord Corbett, Chairman of the British Parliamentary Committee for Iran Freedom said that: "We strongly call on the United Nations Secretary General and his Special Representative in Iraq, Mr Kobler, who on behalf of the international community have responsibility vis-à-vis Ashraf residents that, in order to prevent a massacre to declare their explicit and unequivocal opposition to the forcible displacement of Ashraf residents inside Iraq and the declared deadline. Otherwise UNAMI will be an accomplice in the crime against humanity and the bloodbath that the Government of Iraq and the Iranian regime will initiate in Ashraf."

In a recent statement sent to MEPs by the Iraqi embassy in Brussels, the Iraqi government, having shown no remorse for previous aggressions, outlined a plan for an assault on Camp Ashraf by the year end, ignoring the calls by a variety of international players including the European Parliament and the UN refugee body, the UNHCR.

In a statement dated 13 September 2011, the UNHCR clearly defined the status of Ashraf residents as "asylum seekers". According to the UNHCR statement the "asylum seekers" status entitles Ashraf residents "to benefit from basic protection of their security and well-being. This includes protection against any expulsion or return to the frontiers of territories where their lives or freedom would be threatened (the non-refoulement principle)". The Iraqi government's previous actions have shown that they have no respect for the human rights of the residents of camp Ashraf. This latest statement shows that they have no desire to change this reprehensible approach and that in fact these abuses are likely to increase in ferocity therefore the Iraqi government must be condemned and exposed by international human rights defenders and all concerned human beings.

The statement signed by more than 150 cross party MPs and Peers calls for:

- A complete rejection of any relocation of Ashraf residents inside Iraq by all relevant bodies, the US government, the UN, UNAMI, and EU foreign policy Chief, Catherin Ashton.

- The UN Secretary General and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to station a permanent monitoring team in Ashraf to provide and guarantee the residents’ protection until their complete resettlement in third countries.

- The UN Secretary General, the US government and European governments to table a resolution at the UN Security Council level for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping force and UN blue helmets to protect the residents alongside a permanent UN presence within the Camp until such time as the final resident has been transferred to a third party state where their safety can be guaranteed.

- The US, EU and UN to impel Iraq to withdraw its deadline for closure of Ashraf, bring an end to the inhumane siege and psychological torture of the residents by means of 300 loudspeakers and to allow the residents to have free access to their lawyers and medical services.

- The UNHCR to reaffirm the residents’ legal status as political refugees.

British Parliamentary Committee for Iran Freedom
24 November 2011

This statement has been supported by:
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Rt. Hon. Baroness Boothroyd OM, former Speaker of the House of Commons
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