

## MPs reject Kobler's "roadmap" for Ashraf residents

Wednesday, 25 July 2012

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The roadmap, presented by UNAMI chief Martin Kobler, sidelines the residents' rights under international law and damages the credibility of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq.

In 2009 and 2011, Iraqi security forces launched raids on Camp Ashraf, killing 49 defenceless residents and injuring more than 1,000, at the behest of the Iranian regime. The residents - members of Iran's main opposition PMOI - all have the status of "Protected Persons" under the Fourth Geneva Convention. In order to avoid further bloodshed, residents agreed to a UN plan to relocate to Camp Liberty that was billed by Mr. Kobler as a Temporary Transit Location (TTL) in Baghdad to re-establish their refugee status and relocate to third countries. Some 2,000 residents have already moved.

The Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on 17 July 2012 published a shocking report stating: "The conditions in Camp Liberty are synonymous with those in a detention centre, as residents have no freedom of movement, nor interaction with the outside world, nor do they have freedom of movement and the semblance of a free life within the Camp. The situation of the residents of Camp Liberty is tantamount to that of detainees or prisoners."

The report adds: "The Working Group considers that there is no legal justification for holding the above-mentioned persons and other individuals in Camp Liberty, and that such detention is not in conformity with the standards and principles of international human rights law, and more specifically violates article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 9 and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".

SRSK Kobler has at every opportunity attempted to pressurise further groups of residents to forgo their rights and move to the prison camp.

His latest roadmap sets no specific date for connecting Camp Liberty to the national electricity grid or water works. A previous UN commitment had been made to connect the camp to the city's water network by 20 July. Despite the extreme heat, Iraq also refuses to allow residents to transfer their water pumping equipment and electricity generators from Ashraf.

Furthermore Iraq has prevented the Ashraf residents from selling any of their fixed or moveable properties, a point overlooked in the Kobler roadmap, which also fails to give a date by which the residents would be recognised as refugees and allowed to leave Camp Liberty for third countries.

In light of the Working Group's revelations about conditions at Camp Liberty, the British Parliamentary Committee for Iran Freedom advises the remaining 1,300 Camp Ashraf residents not to relocate to Camp Liberty until the camp comes under UN mandate and Iraq implements the minimum humanitarian requirements. The Committee urges UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to find a replacement for Mr Kobler and appoint a special envoy for the Ashraf crisis.

The British Parliamentary Committee for Iran Freedom is made up of 120 MPs and Peers and has the support of a majority of MPs and over 200 Members of the House of Lords.

The British Parliamentary Committee for Iran Freedom  
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