

URGENT ACTION



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29 July 2009

UA 205/09 At risk of torture or other ill-treatment

IRAQ

Hasan Besharati
Humayoun Deyhim
Gholam Reza Behrouzi
Hosein Fili
Mehdi Zareh
Naser Nour Ebadian
And at least 44 other detainees

Iraqi security forces have stormed a camp occupied by an Iranian organization since the 1980s, apparently using excessive force. Reports indicate that up to eight people were killed and some 400 others injured, while at least 50 have been arrested and are now detained in an unknown location.

Iraqi security forces used bulldozers to force their way into Camp Ashraf on 28 July. The camp, about 60km north-east of Baghdad, is home to about 3,500 members of the People's Mojahedeen Organization of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition group which has been based in Iraq since the early 1980s. According to people in the camp, the security forces used batons, tear gas and water cannons against unarmed residents who were trying to stop them coming into the camp; in the subsequent clashes up to eight camp residents were shot dead; another 400 or so were injured, 13 of whom are in a critical condition. According to residents in the camp, at least 50 people have been arrested, and it is not known where they have been taken. The detainees may be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment, and may face forcible return to Iran, where certain individuals may be in danger. Among them are Hasan Besharati, Humayoun Deyhim, Gholam Reza Behrouzi, Hosein Fili, Mehdi Zareh and Naser Nour Ebadian.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The PMOI is a political organization that opposed and fought against governments appointed by the last Shah of Iran, and in 1979 took part in the fighting in Iran that became known as the Islamic Revolution, which ended in the creation of Iran's present system of government

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invited them to Iraq during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, where they were protected. In 1988, from their base at Camp Ashraf, the PMOI attempted to invade Iran. The Iranian authorities

Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

summarily executed hundreds, if not thousands, of PMOI detainees in an event known in Iran as the “prison massacres”.

Following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the PMOI members disarmed and were accorded “protected persons” status under the Fourth Geneva Convention. However, this lapsed in 2009, when the Iraqi government once again became responsible for most of Iraq's internal affairs.

US-led forces in Iraq provided effective protection for Camp Ashraf until mid-2009, after which they completed their withdrawal to their bases from all Iraqi towns and cities, under an agreement with the Iraqi government.

After they disarmed, the PMOI announced that they had renounced violence. There is no evidence that it has continued to engage in armed opposition to the Iranian government, though people associated with the PMOI still face human rights violations in Iran.

Since mid-2008 the Iraqi government has repeatedly indicated that it wants to close Camp Ashraf, and that residents should leave Iraq or face being forcibly expelled from the country.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- Expressing concern at reports that the security forces used excessive force against the civilian population of Camp Ashraf and, in particular, that eight unarmed residents of Camp Ashraf were shot dead and another 400 injured, 13 of whom critically;
- Urging the authorities to investigate these reports of excessive use of force and, in particular, the killings;
- Expressing concern that at least 50 other residents of the camp are currently detained in an unknown location and calling on the authorities to ensure they are protected from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Urging the authorities to permit those with residency rights in other countries to regularize their presence in Iraq or return to those places, and not to return others to Iran, where some PMOI members will be at risk of torture or death.

APPEALS TO:

Please send appeals via the Iraqi embassy, asking them to forward your appeals to the following officials.

Ambassador Samir Shakir Mahmood Sumaida'ie
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
3421 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington DC 20007

Email: amboffice@iraqiembassy.org

Fax: 1 202 333 1129

Phone: 1 202 742 1600 EXT 136

President

Jalal Talabani

Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Human Rights

Wajdan Mikhail Salam

Email: minister@humanrights.gov.iq

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 9 September 2009.