



Call for the immediate release of the 36 residents of Camp Ashraf

WORLD ORGANISATION AGAINST TORTURE (OMCT)

OPEN LETTER TO THE AUTHORITIES OF IRAQ

H.E. Nouri Al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq

H.E. Medhat Al Mahmoud, President of the Supreme Court

H.E. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Geneva, 1st October 2009

Your Excellencies,

The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) is writing to you regarding the worrying situation of the 36 residents of the Camp Ashraf[1], who were arrested after the Iraqi army entered by force in the Camp on 28 July 2009. OMCT is all the more concerned that these detainees are in poor health and continue to maintain a hunger strike for 66 days now.

Although the investigative judge in the town of al-Khalis has already issued three times a judgement ordering the release of these 36 persons on the grounds that they had no charges to answer, the local police at al-Khalis continue to refuse to implement this decision. Moreover, OMCT was informed that on September 30, 2009 Iraqi Chief Prosecutor Ghadanfar Mahmoud ordered the police to release the 36 detainees. However, the Iraqi police forces subsequently transferred them to an unknown location despite their serious health conditions. As of now, no further information could be obtained regarding their whereabouts.

OMCT therefore calls upon the Iraqi authorities to take prompt action in order to disclose the whereabouts of the 36 Camp Ashraf residents, to release them immediately and unconditionally as well as to ensure their physical and psychological integrity.

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 reiterates its call upon the Iraqi authorities 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 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 forces.

We remain at your disposal should you require any further information about this case and we express our sincere hope that you will take these considerations and requests into account.

Sincerely yours,

Eric Sottas

Secretary General of OMCT

[1] Around 3,500 members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition group, lives in Camp Ashraf.