

## **IRAQ: All 36 Camp Ashraf residents released but OMCT remains concerned about the situation in Camp Ashraf**

**Geneva, 12 October 2009. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) welcomes the release of the 36 Camp Ashraf residents, who were arrested and allegedly tortured and ill-treated during their detention following the raid by the Iraqi security forces on the Camp on 28 July 2009. However, OMCT repeats its call upon the United States (US) authorities and the United Nations (UN) to take effective measures to protect all Camp Ashraf residents.**

On 7 October 2009, the 36 residents were released and returned to Camp Ashraf. Several of them were immediately hospitalised upon their arrival at the camp due to their poor health conditions. They were allegedly tortured and ill-treated during their detention and had been on a hunger strike to protest their arrest. According to the same information received, the 36 persons had been first held at a police station, some 25km from the Camp, and then moved to a military airbase in Baghdad, in flagrant violation of a judicial order by the investigative judge in the town of al-Khalis to release them.

OMCT recalls that about 3,500 members of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition group that left Iran for political reasons in order to escape persecution and to organise resistance against the Iranian regime, are living in Camp Ashraf, since 1986. In April 2009, the Iraqi security forces surrounded the Camp following several statements by both Iranian and Iraqi officials that the PMOI should be expelled from Iraq and the Camp closed, although their members have been designated as “protected persons” under Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the guarantees of which were clearly stipulated in various Protocols signed by the US forces. On 28 July 2009, the Iraqi security forces entered Camp Ashraf with bulldozers, and used grenades, teargas, water canons and pepper spray against Ashraf residents. At least eight people were killed and several persons injured during the raid.

In light of these events, OMCT reiterates its previous calls:

to the Iraqi authorities:

- not to forcibly return any Camp Ashraf resident to Iran where he or she would be at risk of torture and other ill-treatment;

to the United States (US) authorities:

- to ensure the effective protection of Camp Ashraf with the immediate transfer of the responsibility for its protection to the US forces, pending the establishment of an international force;

to the United Nations (UN):

- to send a representative to collect information on the situation in Camp Ashraf in order to inform thereon the relevant UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council, and, if necessary, to immediately urge the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to set up a permanent presence in the Camp for purposes of monitoring and protecting the situation;
- to decide to promptly carry out an international investigation into the alleged human rights violations that took place during and following the raid carried out by Iraqi security forces on the Camp on 28 July.

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L'OMCT a son siège à Genève, en Suisse. Elle coordonne le réseau SOS-Torture composé de 282 organisations régionales et internationales dans 93 pays sur cinq continents.

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