



Top UN envoy concerned over conditions in Iraqi camp

26 October 2009 –The top United Nations envoy to Iraq has expressed his concerns over the humanitarian situation in a camp north of Baghdad, housing thousands of Iranian dissidents.

Some 3,400 members of the People’s Mojahedeen Organization of Iran (PMOI), also known as Mujahedin-e Khalq, live in Camp Ashraf in Iraq’s Diyala province.

During talks with diplomats in the Iraqi capital, Ad Melkert, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative, confirmed the commitment of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq ([UNAMI](#)) to monitor the situation in the camp on a daily basis.

Earlier this month, UN human rights officials welcomed the Government’s decision to release 36 members of the PMOI who had been detained since July when security personnel used force to take control of the camp where they had been staying.

In a two-day operation in late July, Iraqi security personnel took control of Camp Ashraf. Eleven people were killed and dozens more were wounded in that operation.

In recent years, both the mission and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have been exploring how to reach a resolution consistent with Iraq’s legitimate sovereignty and international law.

“The UN continues to advocate that Camp Ashraf residents be protected from forcible deportation, expulsion or repatriation contrary to the non-refoulement principle,” according to a UNAMI [press release](#) issued today.

At the same time, the camp’s leaders have also been urged to cooperate with Iraqi authorities regarding the future of the site’s residents, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) and other agencies are ready to provide the necessary legal and social counseling.

“Efforts are now needed on all sides to reduce tensions and look for solutions,” UNAMI stressed. “The UN calls on the international community to provide all possible assistance in this regard, including resettlement to third countries of those that want to leave the camp.”