



**WORLD ORGANISATION AGAINST TORTURE
PRESS RELEASE**

Iraq: Ongoing concerns for the 3,400 PMOI members living in Camp Ashraf

Geneva, 3 June 2010. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) is deeply concerned that around 3,400 members of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition movement, living in Camp Ashraf, in Iraq, continues to face serious threats, despite several calls by the international community and OMCT to ensure their protection.

OMCT recalls that the Camp was raided by Iraqi forces in July 2009, which resulted in the death of several residents and the injuries of many others, in view of expelling them to Iran. The camp has since been under control of the Iraqi forces.

The United Nations Secretary General, in his quarterly report to the Security Council dated 14 May 2010 on the situation inside Iraq, wrote, "Distrust and tensions between both sides [Ashraf residents and Iraqi government] remained, with limited cooperation regarding access to services and supplies in the camp." The Secretary General also stated that UNAMI "continued to advocate for the residents' unhindered access to goods and services of a humanitarian nature, as well as for their right to be protected from arbitrary mass displacement or forced repatriation against their will in violation of the universally accepted principle of non-refoulement."²

Nevertheless, the situation in Camp Ashraf remains critical. In recent months, its residents have reportedly been subjected to orchestrated harassment carried out jointly by Iraqi authorities and the Iranian regime. Since February 2010, dozens of individuals, purporting to be family members of the residents have been assembled at the Camp's main gate, where they have been shouting profanities and threatening another violent attack. They have been using three dozen loudspeakers round-the-clock, which has deprived the residents of sleep. OMCT believes that the constant warnings about expulsion coupled with repeated threats of execution and incitement to murder and the serious restrictions placed on access to the most essentials, including medical care, constitute serious human rights abuses against the residents of Ashraf.

More importantly, OMCT has learnt that the United States is planning to close down its Forward Operating Base at Ashraf (FOB Grizzly) and relocate the battalion currently stationed there elsewhere, which could imply that it would hand over the facilities to an Iraqi army battalion. Such a transfer would have a dire impact as far as the protection of the residents of Ashraf is concerned. It would force the monitoring team from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq to also leave Ashraf because the team relies on the US forces for protection.

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1 United Nations Assistant Mission for Iraq.

2 http://www.uniraq.org/FileLib/misc/SG_Report_S_2010_240_EN.pdf

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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