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## **Open Letter to the Secretary General - situation in Camp Ashraf in Iraq**

<http://www.fidh.org/Open-Letter-to-the-Secretary>

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**FIDH - Worldwide Human Rights Movement**

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Mr. Ban Ki Moon

United Nations Secretary General

Paris, July 15th, 2011

Re: Open Letter - situation in Camp Ashraf in Iraq

Dear Secretary General,

The current situation in Camp Ashraf in Iraq and the possibility of another humanitarian tragedy require the United Nations to take swift action.

The protection of Camp Ashraf and its 3,400 residents has been under the responsibility of Iraqi authorities since 2009. However, on April 8th, 2011, some 2,500 Iraqi forces penetrated the Camp by using violent means which led to the killing of 36 residents and caused injury to 346 others. Several governments including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Norway as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, subsequently condemned the operation. Mrs. Pillay in a statement emphasized, "there must be an independent inquiry".

Today, it is clear that a similar incident may occur at any time, especially following the Iraqi government's announcement that Camp Ashraf will be closed by the end of the year.

A speedy relocation of residents from Camp Ashraf to other locations in Iraq, as planned by Iraqi authorities, may lead to greater vulnerabilities. Indeed, forcible displacement is illegal and the relocation should only take place, if it eventually does, following a consultative process and prior agreement between the residents of Camp Ashraf, Iraqi authorities and appropriate third parties, namely the United Nations.

The European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Iraq has proposed a plan which has been confirmed by the Foreign affairs Committee. The plan calls for a two-stage solution. The first stage is to provide immediate protection to the residents of Camp Ashraf as a transitory solution before the implementation of a second stage, which is resettlement of the residents to third countries.

We therefore call upon you to set up a United Nations monitoring team on the situation in Camp Ashraf with the necessary authority to carry its protection obligations. Furthermore, in accordance with international refugee law, residents must have full and effective access to claim asylum and have their applications individually examined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In view of the urgency of the situation on the ground, FIDH hopes that you will take the present concerns into consideration as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Souhayr Belhassen President, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)