

Resolution on the humanitarian situation of Camp Ashraf residents

2009/2581(RSP) - 24/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 284 votes to 42 with 75 abstentions a resolution on the humanitarian situation of Camp Ashraf residents. The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, GUE/NGL, UEN and ALDE groups.

Parliament recalls that Camp Ashraf in Northern Iraq was established during the 1980s for members of the Iranian opposition group People's Mujahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI). In 2003 US forces in Iraq disarmed Camp Ashraf's residents and provided them with protection, those residents having been designated "protected persons" under the Geneva Conventions. In a letter dated 15 October 2008 the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the Iraqi Government to protect Camp Ashraf residents from forcible deportation, expulsion or repatriation in violation of the non-refoulement principle, and to refrain from any action that would endanger their life or security. Following the conclusion of the US/Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement, control of Camp Ashraf was transferred to the Iraqi security forces as of 1 January 2009. According to recent statements reportedly made by the Iraqi National Security Advisor, the authorities intend gradually to make the continued presence of the Camp Ashraf residents "intolerable", and he reportedly also referred to their expulsion/extradition and/or their forcible displacement inside Iraq.

Parliament urges the Iraqi Prime Minister to ensure that no action is taken by the Iraqi authorities which violates the human rights of the Camp Ashraf residents and to clarify the Iraqi government's intentions towards them. It calls on the Iraqi authorities to protect the lives and the physical and moral integrity of the Camp Ashraf residents and to treat them in accordance with obligations under the Geneva Conventions, in particular by refraining from forcibly displacing, deporting, expelling or repatriating them in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.

Respecting the individual wishes of anyone living in Camp Ashraf as regards his or her future, Parliament considers that those living in Camp Ashraf and other Iranian nationals who currently reside in Iraq having left Iran for political reasons could be at risk of serious human rights violations if they were to be returned involuntarily to Iran. It insists that no person should be returned, either directly or via a third country, to a situation where he or she would be at risk of torture or other serious human rights abuses.

Members call on the Iraqi Government to end its blockade of the camp, to respect the legal status of the Camp Ashraf residents as protected persons under the Geneva Conventions, and to refrain from any action that would endanger their life or security, i.e. to afford them full access to food, water, medical care and supplies, fuel, family members and international humanitarian organisations.

Lastly, they call on the Council, the Commission and the Member States, together with the Iraqi and US Governments, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, to work towards finding a satisfactory long-term legal status for Camp Ashraf residents.