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Publication | 24.04.2009

Humanitarian situation of Camp Ashraf residents

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Angelika Beer and Cem Özdemir***

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) signed by the United States and Iraq in November 2008, stipulating that US troops will withdraw from Iraqi towns and cities by 30 June 2009 and from the whole country by the end of 2011,

 having regard to the Geneva Convention of 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Additional Protocol,

 having regard to the judgment of the European Court of First Instance delivered on 4 December 2008 ordering the removal of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI) from the European Union list of terrorist organisations,

 having regard to the Human Rights Watch report 'No Exit: Human Rights Abuses Inside the MKO Camps' of 5 May 2005,

 having regard to Rule 115 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Government of Iraq has recently announced its intention to dissolve Camp Ashraf in Northern Iraq, an enclave where approximately 3400 members of the Iranian opposition group PMOI or Mojahedin-e Khalq (also known under the acronyms MEK and MKO) have been living under a type of extraterritorial status granted by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s,

B. whereas the MEK does not have any role as an opposition force in today's Iran, because it lost its credibility due to its collaboration with the Saddam Hussein regime, supporting the Iraqi forces in the Iran-Iraq war and in the suppression of the Kurdish and Shiite revolts,

C. whereas after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US military disarmed the group and granted the members of the MEK 'protected person' status under the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,

D. whereas, according to the provisions of the Iraq-US 2008 Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to end the phase of occupation by the coalition forces, Camp Ashraf was returned to the control of Iraqi security

forces on 1 January 2009,

E. whereas the Iraqi Government recently announced that the remaining Camp Ashraf residents will have to leave Iraq and whereas there are serious concerns that members could be deported back to Iran against their will,

F. whereas the MEK is accusing the Iraqi authorities of having repeatedly blocked food and water supplies as well as medical assistance from entering the camp while the Iraqi security forces as well as the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights have reportedly been denied access to large parts of the camp by the MEK leadership,

G. whereas while the MEK remains on the lists of terrorist organisations of the USA, Iran, Australia and Canada, the European Court of First Instance ruled on 4 December 2009 that the MEK should be removed from the terrorist list on the grounds that the European Council had not provided sufficient evidence that it continued to represent a terrorist threat,

H. whereas according to reports by independent observers, such as journalists and human rights organisations, as well as numerous testimonies from ex-MEK members, some of whom testified to the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iran, the MEK organisation has been transformed from a militant Iranian opposition group into a cult, its members being brainwashed into pseudo-religious veneration of the leaders, Massoud and Marjiam Rajavi, cut off from the outside world and kept bound to the organisation by mental and physical duress,

I. whereas, on the basis of the direct testimonies of a dozen former MKO members including five who were turned over to Iraqi security forces and held in Abu Ghraib prison under Saddam Hussein's government, Human Rights Watch has detailed how dissident members were tortured, beaten and held in solitary confinement for years at military camps in Iraq after they criticised the group's policies and undemocratic practices or indicated that they planned to leave the organisation,

J. whereas under US protection several hundreds of dissident members have been moved to a neighbouring refugee camp, whereas over the last few years the UNHCR has been according them refugee status, resettling them in safe places in Iraq or third countries and whereas this facility was closed in 2008,

K.whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross has, in recent years, arranged the repatriation of more than 250 ex-MEK members to Iran on a voluntary basis,

1. Welcomes the recent US-Iraqi agreements aimed at re-establishing full state sovereignty of the Iraqi people and the elected government over its territory and considers it normal that the laws of Iraq should be applicable to the whole of the country;

2. Takes note of the announcement by the Iraqi Government of its intention to dissolve Camp Ashraf and, in this context, expresses its concern over the humanitarian situation of its residents;

3. Calls on the Iraqi authorities to protect the lives and the physical and mental integrity of the Camp Ashraf residents and to treat them in accordance with their obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention, notably not to deport, expel or repatriate them in violation of the principle of non-refoulement;

4. Expresses grave concern over the reported practices of mental and physical manipulation and severe human rights violations within the MEK cult under the leadership of the Rajavis;

5. Calls on the Iraqi Government and the MEK leadership to grant full and immediate access for international humanitarian and human rights organisations, the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights and the

media to all parts of the camp in order to carry out an independent assessment of the situation;

6. Underlines that all Camp Ashraf residents should be allowed to be interviewed by the Iraqi authorities, the ICRC and the UNHCR at a neutral location outside Camp Ashraf without the presence of MEK officials in order to find out whether they wish to remain inside the organisation or to leave it;

7. Calls on the Iraqi Government and the MEK leadership to allow the departure of all those who do not want to stay in Camp Ashraf any longer and to allow family members to meet with their MKO relatives at a neutral location without an official MEK presence;

8. Calls on the Council, Commission and Member States to send an assessment mission to Camp Ashraf and to assist the Iraqi Government in its attempts to find a humanitarian solution to the longstanding problem, notably by offering resettlement options in the European Union for MEK members who do not want to return to Iran;

9. Calls on the Iraqi Government to re-establish a safe shelter as an emergency measure for those dissident members who continue to escape from Camp Ashraf but have no place to turn to after Ashraf Refugee Camp has been closed by the US forces;

10.Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for the CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UNHCR, the ICRC, the UN Human Rights Council, the MEK and the Government and Parliament of Iraq.

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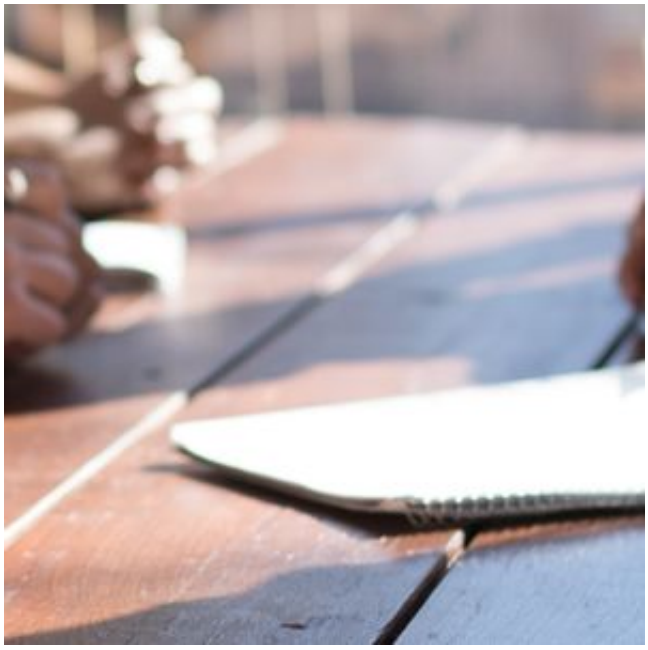

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