

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



## DOCUMENT - IRAQ GOVERNMENT URGED TO INVESTIGATE DEADLY ATTACK ON CAMP LIBERTY

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### IRAQ GOVERNMENT URGED TO INVESTIGATE DEADLY ATTACK ON CAMP LIBERTY

Amnesty International urges the authorities in Iraq to immediately investigate Saturday's rocket attack on Camp Liberty which reportedly left two residents dead and dozens injured.

In the early afternoon of 15 June 2013 Camp Liberty, home of around 3200 Iranian exiles, came under rocket attacks. Kolthoum Sarahati, a female resident, reportedly died instantly in the attack. A second resident, Javad Naghashan, is believed to have died later in hospital as a result of his injuries. At least 27 others were said to have been injured during the attack.

This is the latest in a series of attacks on the Iranian exiles. On 9 February 2013 Camp Liberty was attacked with dozens of rockets which left eight residents dead and scores wounded. No investigation is known to have been initiated by the government. In April 2011, Iraqi troops stormed Camp Ashraf in Diyala governorate, which had housed the Iranian exiles for many years before they were moved to Camp Liberty near Baghdad Airport. The troops used arbitrary and abusive force, including live ammunition, against the residents who tried to resist them. At least 36 people were killed and more than 300 injured. The government failed to conduct a prompt, thorough, independent, and impartial investigation into the incident, which is contrary to international standards, including the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions.

Under international law the Iraqi government is obliged to protect Camp Liberty residents who are asylum seekers undergoing refugee status determination process. In previous attacks on Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty, the government failed to investigate such attacks and no one has ever been brought to account for them. In fact, senior Iraqi government officials have in the past, including during visits to Iran, made it clear that the Camp residents were not welcomed in Iraq.

**Background:** Camp Ashraf was the home of some 3400 Iranian exiles, mostly members and supporters of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI) who were allowed to move to Iraq by Saddam Hussain's government in the 1980s. After the March 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq the Camp and its residents were placed under US protection but this ended in mid-2009 following an agreement between the US authorities and the Iraqi government. Barely a month later, on 28-29 July 2009, Iraqi security forces stormed into the camp; at least nine residents were killed and many more were injured. Thirty-six residents who were detained were allegedly tortured and beaten. In 2011 the Iraqi government announced the closure of Camp Ashraf after relocating its residents to a new location, Camp Liberty in north-east of Baghdad.

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