

USCCAR Urges Secretary Kerry to Facilitate Immediate Return of Residents of Iraq's Camp Liberty "Killing Field" to Camp Ashraf

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 13, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ — The US Committee for Camp Ashraf Residents (USCCAR), on behalf of hundreds of Iranian-Americans whose loved ones in Iraq's Camp Liberty were the target of the Tehran-engineered rocket attack last weekend, has written to the US Secretary of State John Kerry to urge him to facilitate the immediate return of Camp Liberty residents to Camp Ashraf where they are far better protected against such attacks.

Saturday's cowardly attack, which left seven residents killed and more than 100 seriously wounded, attests to the fact that this camp is neither safe nor secure for the residents whom the UN Refugee Agency has recognized as asylum seekers.

In the letter, USCCAR noted that "By all measures, Camp Liberty is a killing field. It is only half a square kilometers in size, 80 times smaller than Camp Ashraf. The camp lacks any shelter or high concrete walls to shield the residents against rocket attacks. The residential areas are consisted of dilapidated trailers that are crammed next to each other. The trailers' aluminum walls provide no protection at all against rocket shrapnel... In contrast, the sprawling Camp Ashraf has buildings made from concrete and contains protective shelters."

"We, the families of Iranian dissidents in Camp Liberty and Camp Ashraf, hold the United States responsible for safety and security of our loved ones in accordance with its treaty and international obligations as well as its written guarantees to each and every resident in 2004 that it will protect them until their final disposition," the letter added.

Recalling Secretary Kerry's condemnation of the April 2011 attack on Camp Ashraf by Iraqi forces as a "massacre" when he was the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair, the letter urged Secretary Kerry "to facilitate the immediate return [of the residents] to Camp Ashraf before more innocent lives are taken by Tehran and their Iraqi proxies."

Some 3,100 members of Iran's principal opposition movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (PMOI/MEK) have been living at Camp Liberty, a former U.S. military base near Baghdad international airport after they left Camp Ashraf, their home for 26 years, following US and UN assurances about their safety and security. About one-third of the residents are women and an equal number are former political prisoners in Iran.

SOURCE: US Committee for Camp Ashraf Residents (USCCAR)

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