

URGENT ACTION

SEVEN IRANIANS ABDUCTED FROM CAMP ASHRAF

Seven Iranian exiles, members of the People's Mojahedeen Organization of Iran (PMOI), were abducted from Camp Ashraf, northeast of Baghdad, on 1 September by armed men who had attacked the Camp and killed 52 residents. Unconfirmed reports have suggested that they are in the custody of the Iraqi authorities. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment and could be forcibly returned to Iran.

Six women, **Fatemeh Tahoori**, **Vajihe Karbalaey** (aka Vajihe Karbalaey Fatah), **Mahnaz Azizi** (aka Mahbobeh Lashkari), **Lila Nabahat**, **Zahra Ramezani** (aka Sedegh Ebrahimpour), **Fatema Sakhie** and a man, **Mohammad Ratebi** (aka Mohsen Nicknamei) were abducted on 1 September from Camp Ashraf, about 60km north-east of Baghdad in Diyala governorate, when the camp was raided by armed men who shot and killed 52 camp residents. All of the seven are members of the People's Mojahedeen Organization of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition group. Amnesty International condemns the killing of the 52 residents and has called for an independent and impartial investigation into the killings.

Eye witnesses from the Camp stated that they had seen the seven people in handcuffs, being beaten and thrown to the ground and then taken away in a white minibus. Their whereabouts remain unknown although unconfirmed reports have suggested that the seven were held in a detention facility at the former al-Muthanna airport in central Baghdad. The Iraqi government has denied responsibility for the attack although Iraqi forces have been responsible for previous attacks on the camp that resulted in dozens of resident deaths.

Please write immediately in Arabic or English or your own language:

- Calling on the Iraqi authorities to immediately clarify the whereabouts and the legal status of Fatemeh Tahoori, Vajihe Karbalaey, Mahnaz Azizi, Lila Nabahat, Zahra Ramezani, Fatema Sakhie and Mohammad Ratebi;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that, if held in Iraqi custody, the seven people are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that they are released immediately unless they are charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence.
- Urging them not to forcibly return the seven individuals to Iran where they would be at risk of torture and possibly execution;
- Reminding the Iraqi government of its obligations under international law not to forcibly return individuals to a country where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations, including torture.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 OCTOBER 2013 TO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES OF IRAQ IN YOUR COUNTRY AND ADDRESSED TO:

Prime Minister

His Excellency Nuri Kamil al-Maliki,
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)
Baghdad, Iraq

Email: info@pmo.iq (keep trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Hassan al-Shammari
Ministry of Justice
Baghdad, Iraq

Contactable in Arabic via web site:

<http://www.moj.gov.iq/complaints.php>

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Human Rights

His Excellency Mohammad Shayaa al-Sudani

Ministry of Human Rights

Baghdad, Iraq

Email: shakawa@humanrights.gov.iq

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Samir Shakir Mahmood Sumaida'ie

Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, 3421 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20007

Email: amboffice@iraqiembassy.org | Fax: 1 202 333 1129 | Phone: 1 202 742 1600 EXT 136

Please check with AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The residents of Camp Ashraf are members and supporters of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), a political organization opposed to the Iranian government and outlawed in Iran which formerly engaged in armed action against the Iranian government. Camp Ashraf previously housed some 3,400 Iranian exiles, mostly members and supporters of the 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 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 April 2011, Iraqi troops stormed Camp Ashraf again. The troops used excessive 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, in breach of international standards, including the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions.

In 2011 the Iraqi government announced their intention to close Camp Ashraf after relocating its residents to a new location, Camp Liberty in Baghdad. After the majority of residents had been relocated about 100 people were allowed to stay behind in Camp Ashraf in order to resolve remaining property issues.

According to a December 2011 memorandum of understanding between the UN and the government of Iraq, the UNHCR may process requests for international protection from residents of the camps. Those residents who apply for international protection are asylum seekers under international law. The latest attack on 1 September 2013 saw the killing of 52 residents who remained in Camp Ashraf. Video footage and photographs showed that many of the victims had been killed by gunshots to the head, some were handcuffed.

Name: Fatemeh Tahoori (f), Vajihe Karbalaey (f), Mahnaz Azizi (f), Lila Nabahat (f), Zahra Ramezani (f), Fatema Sakhie (f) and Mohammad Ratebi (m)

Issue(s): Abduction, Risk of torture, Forced return, Unlawful killing

UA: 242/13

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Country: Iraq