



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

PRESIDENT

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SENIOR EURO MP CONDEMNS IRAQI ATROCITY

The European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq held an extraordinary meeting to discuss last Sunday's massacre in Ashraf. Struan Stevenson, President of the Delegation said:

"We strongly condemn the brutal attack by Iraqi forces against the residents of Ashraf. Killing defenseless, unarmed civilians, many of whom were shot in the back of the head while handcuffed, machine gunning the wounded and executing the injured in the camp's clinic, were blatant crimes against humanity. Silence in relation to such murderous activity is shameful and an encouragement for further atrocities.

"By placing the 42 surviving men and women in Ashraf under a state of full siege, with no electricity and curtailed food and water supplies, I believe the Iraqi authorities are preparing the ground for a second attack where all of the residents will be liquidated. The silence from the Western media and governments who are focused on the Syrian crisis, has been a deliberate calculation of the Iraqi government and their Iranian sponsors, who will now turn their attention to wiping out the 3,000 refugees in Camp Liberty.

"UN officials went to Ashraf on 1st and 2nd September and saw the 52 bodies, mostly handcuffed. The bodies have been handed over to the UN representative for autopsy under the supervision of international institutions. We are therefore demanding a full and independent investigation by the UN into this atrocity with those responsible held to account and charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes. The UN, US & EU must demand the immediate release of the 7 hostages, including 6 women, who were snatched from the camp during the massacre and whom we fear may be deported to Iran to face inevitable torture and execution. We must also demand the presence of UN blue helmets or at the very least in the short-term UN observers in both Ashraf and Liberty to deter further aggression.

"It is clear from reports in both Reuters and CNN where the responsibility for this atrocity lies:

Reuters wrote on September 1st: *"Two Iraqi security sources said that army and special forces had opened fire on residents who had stormed a post at the entrance to Camp Ashraf, a site that Iraq's government wants closed down. They said at least 19 were killed, 52 wounded and 38 arrested and that they believed residents were not armed."*

CNN's web site wrote on September 1st: *"Two officials with Iraq's Interior Ministry told CNN that security forces raided Camp Ashraf after their base was hit by mortar rounds."*

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry's News Agency (Mehr) wrote on September 1st that: *"On the sidelines of the cabinet meeting, the Intelligence Minister said about the attack on Ashraf Garrison that the Iraqi government has been forced to confront the terrorists residing at Ashraf garrison."*

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"We are extremely angry of the inaction of the UN, USA and the EU. Ashraf residents were taken to Liberty on the promise that they would be sent to safe third countries, but nearly 2 years on, the number of people who have been resettled is only 5% of the population. There are no prospects for their transfer. This is absolutely unacceptable. We call on the 27 member states of the EU and other European countries such as Norway and Switzerland, and to the USA and Canada, to accept the residents of these two camps as soon as possible.

"We urge the EU, the member states and Baroness Ashton to pressure Iraq to release the 7 hostages who were kidnapped on Sunday and to form an international fact finding committee for an independent and thorough investigation without the influence of Iraq and with the presence of lawyers and representatives of the residents and victims. We believe that Europe can play a very important role in this regard. The 3000 refugees and asylum seekers must be airlifted to safety without delay. This must be a UN priority before further avoidable bloodshed occurs".

Struan Stevenson MEP

President, European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq

Note to Editors:

A UNAMI delegation led by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (DSRSG), Mr. Gyorgy Busztin, and including UNAMI Chief of Human Rights and of Medical Sections, conducted a visit to Ashraf yesterday, where they met separately with the camp's surviving residents and the commander of Diyala's Police.

Inside the camp, the delegation witnessed 52 bodies in a makeshift morgue. All the deceased appeared to have suffered gunshot wounds, the majority of them in the head and the upper body, and several with their hands tied. The delegation also saw several damaged buildings, including one burnt, and were shown quantities of explosives.

The delegation was informed by the camp's residents that seven persons were still missing.

After UNAMI's mediation between the Iraqi authorities and the camp's residents, the latter agreed to allow Iraqi ambulances to transport the bodies of the deceased to the morgue in Baquba. The Chief of Human Rights Office and other members of the delegation remained in Camp Ashraf for further monitoring.

Reiterating his previous statement, the UN Envoy expressed his outrage at the brutal killing of the camp's residents. Mr. Busztin took note of the statement issued by the Government of Iraq announcing it has initiated its own investigation into the tragic events and acknowledging its responsibility for the safety of the camp's residents. "I call on the Iraqi government to ensure that a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into this atrocious crime is conducted without delay and that the results of the investigation are made public", he said.

Underscoring the utmost volatility of the situation, as Camp Ashraf does not provide an adequate level of security for its residents, Mr. Busztin affirmed that "until the camps residents are relocated to safety, all measures must be taken to protect their lives".