



UNAMI

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS: FROM ASHRAF TO HURRIYA

Monitoring Human Rights: Relocation of Residents from Camp Ashraf to Camp Hurriya

BASIS FOR UN INVOLVEMENT IN ASHRAF

The UN is mandated by the Security Council to promote the protection of human rights in Iraq and to promote and support the safe, orderly and voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons.

HISTORY OF THE CAMP AND UN ENGAGEMENT

Camp Ashraf was established as a base for the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) in 1986 under an agreement with the Saddam Hussein government. In February 2009, the United States Forces in Iraq (USF-I) transferred the control of Ashraf to the Government of Iraq (GoI). From late October 2009 until July 2010, in cooperation with the GoI and USF-I, UNAMI continued its human rights monitoring activity through regular visits to Ashraf.

HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS AND UN CURRENT ENGAGEMENT

On 8 April 2011, 34 residents of Camp Ashraf were killed in clashes with Iraqi security forces. The GoI announced it would close Ashraf by the end of 2011. Many of the 3,200 residents of Ashraf claim they are unable to return to Iran. At the same time, the GoI has not granted the residents the right to remain in Iraq, and considers them unlawfully present in the country. Throughout 2011, the GoI continued to express its intention to close Camp Ashraf.

UNAMI worked closely with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the GoI to explore long-term solutions to an increasingly volatile situation. On 21 December 2011, the Secretary-General urged the GoI to extend the deadline for the closure of Ashraf to April 2012. Despite the extension, the UN continued to be concerned about a recurrence of violence if further attempts were made to close Camp Ashraf. On 25 December 2011, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Martin Kobler, signed a memorandum of understanding with the GoI.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- The objective of the MoU is to facilitate the safe and orderly relocation of residents from Camp Ashraf to Camp Hurriya for identification by UNHCR of individuals in need of international protection, and eventual voluntary repatriation to Iran or resettlement in third countries. Key points:
- the UN has an impartial and facilitating role.
- the GoI is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of transportation to Camp Hurriya and of Camp Hurriya itself. The GoI is exclusively responsible for ensuring that transit and living conditions meet international human rights and humanitarian standards.
- the GoI allows Hurriya residents to make their own arrangements for the provision of water, food, communications, sanitation and the maintenance and rehabilitation of equipment.
- the UN undertakes to monitor the transit process and the humanitarian conditions at Camp Hurriya and to identify individuals in need of international protection through UNHCR.
- the MoU stresses that no resident will be forcibly returned to Iran.

RELOCATION OF RESIDENTS

- The first voluntary movement of 400 residents took place on 18 February 2012.
- Four more movements have since taken place, with a total of 1,964 people successfully relocated to Hurriya.
- On 17 August 2012, the residents announced that the next group of 400 would relocate to Camp Hurriya immediately after the Eid al-Fitr holiday.
- There have been no violent incidents at either camp since the relocation process began.

RESETTLEMENT OF RESIDENTS

- The ultimate purpose of the MoU is to resettle residents in third countries.
- Member States have yet to come forward to accept eligible residents for resettlement.

UN MONITORING

- Since February 2012, the UN has had monitors on the ground in Camp Hurriya at all times. These human rights experts have continuously monitored the conditions at the camp and consistently found them to meet basic humanitarian and human rights standards.
- The UN ensures an around-the-clock presence at Hurriya through regular monitoring visits and a 24-hour hotline.
- The UN's monitoring activities include: observing adherence to human rights obligations; reporting on humanitarian conditions, abuses or violations of human rights; interviewing; and advocating appropriate actions with relevant parties.

CONDITIONS AT CAMP HURRIYA

- The 2,000 residents of Camp Hurriya live in residential containers. On average, there are between two and four people per container, as allocated by the residents' leadership. All rooms are fully air-conditioned.
- Residents are free to undertake renovation projects with the approval of camp management. They have completed a range of landscaping initiatives and refurbishment of buildings. They are also free to bring in external contractors to implement these projects, with the agreement of camp management.
- The camp has a dining facility with an industrial kitchen, a fully equipped gym, a mosque, several community centres, and numerous recreational spaces.
- A medical facility is staffed by 2 Iraqi doctors working in shifts; at least one doctor is present at all times. Two ambulances are on constant standby. The GoI ensures movement of residents to any external medical appointments as necessary.
- Bottled drinking water is imported by the residents. In addition, each resident has at least 200L of water per day for hygiene and other uses. Basic humanitarian standards require 100L of water per day. In Iraq, the average person gets between 70 and 90L per day. A water pumping and purification plant is being installed in the camp.
- Electricity is currently provided by 19 generators, half of which operate at any given time to ensure that electricity is provided 24 hours a day. The average Iraqi in Baghdad has access to 9 hours of electricity per day.
- Residents have cell phones, internet connection and satellite television.

ROADMAP AND NEXT STEPS

On 24 July 2012, UNAMI presented a roadmap to the GoI that suggests a series of steps to complete the peaceful relocation of all residents to Hurriya where they can safely undergo processing to identify those in need of international protection. Discussions are continuing on the points raised by the residents' representatives.

For more information, please contact the UNAMI Public Information Office: unami-information@un.org

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