

UN envoy welcomes last major transfer of Iranian exiles from Iraqi camp



Entrance gate of Camp Ashraf

16 September 2012 – The United Nations envoy in Iraq on Sunday welcomed the last major relocation of Iranian exiles from a camp outside of the capital, Baghdad, and called for a renewed focus on resettling the residents in third countries.

“This is an important step as we near the end of the relocation process. I would like to thank the residents for their cooperation,” said Martin Kobler, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

“I would also like to thank the Government of Iraq for ensuring this last major relocation and paving the way for the peaceful closure of Camp Ashraf under the terms of the memorandum of understanding,” he added in a news release.

The issue of Camp Ashraf – located in eastern Iraq and made up of several thousand Iranian exiles, many of them members of a group known as the People’s Mojahedeen of Iran – has been one of the main issues dealt with by UNAMI for more than 18 months.

The last major relocation convoy, carrying 680 residents, has arrived in Camp Hurriya, where a process to determine refugee status is being carried out by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Of the 3,280 residents originally in Camp Ashraf, only a small group now remains on a temporary basis to arrange the details pursuant to the closure of the camp, according to UNAMI.

UN monitors will continue to oversee the process, including the relocation of remaining residents to Camp Hurriya. Now that the majority of the residents have been transferred, Mr. Kobler called for a renewed focus on resettlement. "I urge the international community to speed up its efforts to accept residents in third countries," he said

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42901&Cr=Iraq&Cr1=camp#.UHXNzU37JL1>