

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's speech on the House floor on Camp Ashraf

December 15, 2009

Today I rise with the plea to this government and state department and will say those who are now huddled at Camp Ashraf in Iraq. This government that we propped up that we've seen thousands of our treasure lost in Iraq so that we can have a democratic government. So that it will have its boundaries and its own sovereignty. So it would not be governed and puppet of some other country, but yet Iranian dissidents are now huddled, fearful for their lives.

In fact Assistant Secretary of State, Jeffrey Feltmen said, "We're actually more concerned about an Iraqi desire to move Camp Ashraf to someplace else inside Iraq. The expectation is not that they're going to expel the MEK Camp Ashraf residents, but that they would try to move them — forcibly move them to a different location in Iraq, and that, too, could lead to bloodshed."

Amnesty International fears that "forced removals of the residents of Camp Ashraf would put them at risk of arbitrary arrest, torture or other forms of ill-treatment, and unlawful killing."

I've met with the Iranians, their families, many of whom are in this camp, a niece, a mother, a brother, and they have no relief. They have no refuge but us. So it is crucial that that we intervene with the present Iraqi government, seemingly sometimes a puppet of Iran, to not in any way cause a bloodshed and the lost of these dear souls. All they want it to do is to be a member of freedom. Yes they have disagreement with the present government, but they are refugees in the world order and world sense they are refugee fleeing oppression.

Let me tell you where Iraq wants to send these huddled few thousands who simply wants to be left alone. Who have already been the eye of storm, who have seen loved one lost and bloodshed inside of the camp and where do they want to send them?

To the east of this area is "Abo Siah" and to the west is "al-Shabakeh," the resting place for tribes and migrants who live in Iraqi deserts. Moving sandy hills, which in the summer rich temperatures of 70 degrees Celsius (158F) under the heat of the sun, prevent growth of plants and creation of waterways and toilets for the migrant tribes. Some of the small and large wild trees which cover a small part of the area are desperate to survive during sand storms and the relocation of moving sand hills. Many of them have been trapped under moving sand hills while many others, despite having deep roots, are taken with the sand storm to locations dozens of kilometers away.

This is where the members of Camp Ashraf will be sent, a vast desert of death.

And so it is imperative that this government that we've propped up, that we've sent our soldiers to die for do not have the authority to kill 4000 Iranian dissidents who simply want to leave in peace and alone.

I hope that we can reach our government to provide safe solemn for them.

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