

Speech of Hon. Ted Poe of Texas in the House of Representatives

December 14, 2009

Madam Speaker, on December 10, 2009 the Iraqi government announced that it is going to forcibly displace thousands of Iranian dissidents living in Camp Ashraf to a remote prison in the Iraqi desert. The Iraqi government knows the world recognizes Camp Ashraf as a refuge for those who stand tall for freedom and democracy, so it is demolishing their homes they have lived in for over 20 years and moving them to southern Iraq, where the Iraqi government thinks it can do whatever it wants to them and the world won't notice.

The families in Camp Ashraf's biggest crime is that they love freedom and oppose the oppressive Iranian regime. Tehran has for months now pressured the Iraqi government to hand over Camp Ashraf residents so it can imprison and torture them just like they do to all who dare speak out against the regime. This is no secret: Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani explicitly asked Iraqi lawmakers in early November to expel these dissidents from Iraqi soil.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, wanting to better relations with Iran, sent Iraqi government forces to brutally attack Camp Ashraf residents in July. It was a humanitarian catastrophe leaving 11 unarmed residents dead, 500 wounded, and 36 abducted.

We cannot ignore any perpetrator, whether friend or foe, who seeks to violently and brutally oppress innocent people. America cannot forget the people of Camp Ashraf.

Prime Minister Al-Maliki should stand by repeated and written assurances he has given to the United States and the United Nations to respect the fundamental rights of the residents of Ashraf . These are "protected persons" under the Fourth Geneva Convention. President Obama should honor the U.S. government's repeated promises to protect these people.

The President and Secretary Clinton should undertake whatever steps necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the residents of Camp Ashraf . The increasingly vulnerable regime in Tehran must not be allowed to extend its repressive tentacles beyond Iran's border and crack down on its principal opposition. Someone must stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

It's bad enough that Iran brutalizes Iranian dissidents in Iran; the world cannot ignore Iran's intent to brutalize its own people in Camp Ashraf in the foreign country of Iraq as well.

And that's just the way it is.

<http://ncpdaus.org/speech-of-hon-ted-poe-of-texas-in-the-house-of-representatives/>