

House Members Denounce Iran & Iraq's Plan to Relocate the Residents of Camp Ashraf, Iraq

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Remarks by members of Congress

Congressman Bob Filner of California

Good Afternoon, my name is Bob Filner, I'm a Congressman from San Diego, California and Co-Chair of the Iran Human Rights and Democracy Caucus in the Congress with me is Mike Coffman new Congressman from Colorado and we thank you for being involved so quickly in these issues and we expect other Congressmen to be joining us and we have representatives of the families who are in fact in Camp Ashraf at this very moment under the threat of being forcibly removed.

We are here to call on whoever will listen, the Iraqi government, the US government, to halt the forcible relocation of the residents of Camp Ashraf. Residents numbering about 3,500 have been told, in fact just this morning, leaflets were passed out by the Iraqi government asking for volunteers to be removed. Nobody voluntarily presented themselves and so we are hoping it does not occur; the beginning of a forcible removal soon.

In terms of the American government we believe that the American government took on the responsibilities of protecting the fourth Geneva Convention to protect political refugees and we expect the US to act on this commitment. There have been recent moves with the Iraqi government to transfer responsibilities but we do not think that that abrogates the responsibility of the American government to the people who will be tortured and executed if they are returned to Iran.

We have been assured in various times by the State Department that the US government still has this obligation and commitment and will live up to it. Just yesterday Secretary Clinton was talking human rights of individuals around the world. Right now we have a human rights case that is an emergency and we expect the Secretary, we expect the President of the United States, and we expect all of the US government to protect the residents of Ashraf.

These are Iranian dissidents; these are people who have provided us with some of the best information on what is going on in Iran. These are the people who we will be counting on; in fact remove the Iranian regime. These are the people we must protect. We have a resolution in the House of Representatives, H. Res 704 which has 120 bipartisan co-sponsors which says and I'll just read it because it's not one of our 2000 page bills, it's just one sentence. The resolution calls upon the president to take all necessary and appropriate steps to support the commitments of the United States government under international law and treaty obligations to ensure the physical security and protection of Camp Ashraf residents against inhumane treatment and involuntary deportation by Iraqi security forces.

I have appealed to the leadership of the Congress to take this up this week. I hope we can do it before we adjourn. As I said we have already 120 bipartisan co-sponsors and we think this congress and this administration has to take all necessary steps to protect the safety of those who are in fact on our side in the struggle against the tyrannical Iranian government. Let's help our friends when they need the help the most.

Congressman Michael Coffman of Colorado

I served in Iraq with Marine in 2005 and 2006, and worked and support of their elections to help establish Iraq's first constitutional government and I appeal to the government of Iraq and all who all is listen is Congress Filner said, to respect the human rights of those in Camp Ashraf that they are political refugees and that forcibly evicting them from Camp Ashraf, I believe would cause them great harm. The country of Iraq is souvenir country, and it is not suborning to Iran in this instance by forcibly evicting those in Camp Ashraf, it is subordinating itself to the will of Iran and not to being a sovereign country of its own and again I think it's important that it respects the residents of Camp Ashraf as political refugees and that moving them would clearly harm them a great deal.

Congressman Dana Rohrabacher of California

We did not spend a trillion dollars nor sacrifice the blood and suffering of our young defenders in order to see that Iranian nationals who oppose the Iranian mullahs are being attacked by the government we put in place in Iraq. This is unacceptable. We are going to be looking very closely at what is happening here. These brave people, who are the only people I know who are in the field fighting the mullah dictatorship in Iran. If they are thrown to the wolves, if their human rights are being violated, if they are treated inhumanely there will be a price to pay by the Iraqi government. This smells of a rotten deal between the Iraqi government and the Iranian mullah dictatorship. The United States can't just stand aside and just let this happen. We recognize that the government of Iraq is the sovereign power in that country, but that doesn't mean that we will not be diligent in backing up the human rights of those people who are putting themselves on the line in order to bring democracy and freedom in Iran. With that said, this is a matter of high concern. We are watching very closely the government of Iraq should understand they cannot violate the human rights of these people who are opposing the mullah dictatorship of Iran without serious consequences to themselves. So whatever happens there we will be watching and they are not just free to do whatever they want to these brave souls.

Congressman Ted Poe of Texas

It should be known that we half way round the world are aware of what's taking place in Camp Ashraf. It does not go unnoticed that the oppressive Iranian regime is trying to influence the Iraqi administration to relocate those good people in Camp Ashraf to places unknown. Many of us in Congress and other people in United States are quiet aware of this tragedy, but we are going to watch what takes place.

We expect and demand that the Iraqi government secure the safety of these people in Camp Ashraf. That if any harm comes to them that harm will be on the backs and shoulders of the Iraqi government, with the influence of the Iranian government ever present and the displacement of these people. We hope that Iraq follows the Geneva Conventions and secures the safety of these people, these good people that all they want is freedom.

The right to be left alone, the right not to be oppressed by any government, whether it is their own or some foreign government, so, to the people of Camp Ashraf and to the families of these folks throughout the world including those here in the United States, we are concerned. We are supportive of the freedom and of the liberty of these individuals at Camp Ashraf and we will be ever mindful, watchful to make sure their safety is secure because human rights is something that we do in this country. Thank you very much.

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