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International Conference at UN - Geneva calls on UN Secretary General and High Commissioner for Human Rights to appoint a permanent monitoring team to prevent another massacre in Camp Ashraf



From left: **Gianfranco Fattorini**, Co-Chair of Movement against (MRAP); **Madeleine Rees**, Secretary General of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; **Nontombi Tutu**, human rights activist; **Struan Stevenson**, President of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq in the European Parliament; **Michel Joli**, Secretary General of Mitterrand Foundation (France Libertés); **Mrs. Maryam Rajavi** the President-elect of the Iranian Resistance; **Alejo Vidal Quadras**, Vice- President of European Parliament **Ruth Wedgewood**, Chair, International Law and Diplomacy, Jonh Hopkins University; **Sid Ahmed Ghozali**, former prime minister of Algeria.

A number of non-governmental human rights organizations' leaders, European parliamentarians, and international lawyers met on Wednesday September 21 at the UN European Headquarters in Geneva and warned about another imminent Srebrenica-like massacre at Camp Ashraf and called for an urgent measure for protection of its residents.

Alejo Vidal Quadras, Vice- President of the European Parliament: *I suggest that the High Commissioner for Human Rights dispatches a delegation to Ashraf with enough time to spend there in order to carefully examine every aspect of life in the camp and then publish a report based on research and not on the reports fabricated by the Iranian regime.*

Struan Stevenson, President of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq in the European Parliament: *We need protection for these people while UNHCR carries out its individual interviews. We need the blue flag of the UN flying above this refugee camp, because that's what it is! And until we get that level of protection, these people continue to be at risk.*

Danielle Mitterrand:

They have invented for Ashraf all kinds of new virtual walls. First the wall of oblivion, then a wall of lies, then of silence, then of food and health blockade. Finally, the wall of decibels and the wall of monitoring and electronic jamming.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu :

I ask the Iraqi Government and the international community to respect the integrity of this process, and to see to it that the residents of Camp Ashraf are ensured their safety and security, so that the UNHCR can fulfill its mandate in a safe and confidential location.

Sid Ahmed Ghozali, former Prime Minister of Algeria:

For me, Ashraf is not only a community at risk, it is a promise for the future that is in danger. It is this promise for the future of Islamic societies that they want to kill, when they want to kill Ashraf.

Mrs. Maryam Rajavi the President-elect of the Iranian Resistance: The Secretary General and UNAMI must guarantee the international protection of Ashraf

The keynote speaker of the meeting, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, stated that at least 490 people have been executed in Iran since January 2011. According to the Iranian state-run media, just on Sunday, September 18, twenty three people were hanged. She added, "Nonetheless, not only has the UN been indifferent to the repressions in Iran and in Camp Ashraf, it is hosting the criminal President of the criminal mullahs to the UN General Assembly in New York. And the UN High Commission for Human Rights failed to mention human rights violations in Iran during the recent UN human rights council meeting."

In view of the September 13 statement by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in which the Commission has recognized the residents of Ashraf as "Asylum Seekers" and bearers of international fundamental protections according to international laws, Mrs. Rajavi said, "The Secretary General and UNAMI must guarantee the international protection of Ashraf on the ground and in the field; this is possible at the order of the Secretary General."

Mrs. Rajavi continued, "First, it is necessary for the Secretary General to declare Ashraf a demilitarized zone and under permanent observation of the United Nations; and to order deployment of UN observers to Ashraf. Had the UN monitoring forces not left the Camp in July 2010, the pursuing massacre on April 8 would not have happened. "Second, the UNHCR must fully recognize the refugee rights of all Camp residents to prevent further attacks on the Camp by the Iranian regime or its collaborators in Iraq. "Third, the US must actively engage in guaranteeing the rights implied by UNHCR statement and must specifically prevent the Iraqi government's human rights violations against Camp Ashraf."

"If the U.S. cannot afford the expenses, the Iranian resistance is willing to pay the expenses of the UN monitoring team at Camp Ashraf," emphasized Mrs. Rajavi.

Mrs. Rajavi also called for an end to the silence and inaction regarding executions and tortures in Iran and demanded that the dossier of human rights in Iran be referred to the UN Security Council.



Alejo Vidal Quadras, Vice-President of the European Parliament:

By conducting a massacre in Ashraf, the Iranian regime wishes to continue its suppression of the uprising of a whole nation of 80 million people.

It is looking to obliterate a source of inspiration and hope for a great number of Iranians who aspire to live in democracy and freedom. But the mullahs in Tehran have a wider objective too. In eliminating Ashraf and the PMOI, they want to remove the most important political and cultural impediment against Islamic fundamentalists.

In a nutshell, the suppression of Ashraf paves the way for widespread massacres in Iran and the spread of fundamentalism in the region. On the contrary, protecting Ashraf is tantamount to defending democracy in this convulsed part of the world.

What I witnessed in Ashraf in 2008 was a model of morality, of solidarity and of brotherhood. This is in essence what has helped Ashraf residents to resist all pressures over the years. I am sure that any visitor to Ashraf will draw the same conclusions from this unforgettable experience...

The Iranian regime invests enormously so that in the European Parliament we stop supporting the Iranian resistance. And despite of its efforts, we recognized this psychological war and stood against it.

I must say I feel extremely disappointed when I hear sometimes that bogus information receives attention in the United Nations and its related bodies.

I suggest that the High Commissioner for Human Rights dispatches a delegation to Ashraf with enough time to spend there in order to carefully examine every aspect of life in the camp and then publish a report based on research and not on the reports fabricated by the Iranian regime.

We should work full steam ahead and rise to our responsibilities to support the Iranian Democratic Resistance and protect Ashraf. It is the future of Iran, it is the future of the Middle East but it is already our future which is at stake.



Struan Stevenson, President of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq in the European Parliament:

When 2,000 military personnel with armored vehicles attacked these 3,400 unarmed civilians, and shot them down like rabbits, ran over them with tanks, crushing them to the ground, and spraying girls with boiling water, they went there to murder, to maim, to cause maximum disfigurement and injury and death. And there has been no remorse from Nouri-al-Maliki and his government.

I am delighted to say now that Antonio Guterres, the High Commissioner for Refugees, is taking a real active role in this issue. He has asked for the 3,400 residents to apply for individual asylum. And immediately, 3,400 applications arrived on his desk. And these people now are protected persons under international law. And Nouri-al-Maliki should pay attention to this. We will not tolerate any further violence or attacks on the people of Ashraf.

But it's time that the High Commissioner for Human Rights took some action. We need a combined strategy from the UN. We need protection for these people while UNHCR carries out its individual interviews, and the registration process of all these refugees goes ahead. We need the blue flag of the UN flying above this refugee camp, because that's what it is! And until we get that level of protection, these people continue to be at risk. The time for action has arrived. We only have three policies now that we need to implement.

First of all, cancel this ridiculous and threatening deadline for clearing Ashraf by the end of this year. Secondly, provide protection now. Put the blue flag over this refugee camp. And, thirdly, all the EU Member States, all of the countries that love freedom, that praise democracy and human rights must help with the resettlement of these 3,400 people. And it's not a lot to ask.



Sid Ahmed Ghozali, Former Prime Minister of Algeria:

Ashraf's issue is obviously a serious and three-fold offense. First, an offense to humanitarian and moral rights of a community of 3,400 people; second, a serious violation of international law; and third, a serious threat to peace and stability, not only in the immediate vicinity of Iran, but also in Iraq, Palestine, on the Arabian and North Africa. Ashraf has a geopolitical and geostrategic dimension that goes beyond the purely Iranian national issue. The determination of the Iranian regime who wants to eradicate this population that has become emblematic of the Iranian Resistance is only the expression of a cruel relentless strategy inside Iran to perpetuate the domination of a people by a hated regime and therefore to seek to destroy its number one enemy. For me, Ashraf is not only a community at risk, it is a promise for the future that is in danger. It is this promise for the future of Islamic societies that they want to kill, when they want to kill Ashraf.



Christiane Perregaux, Co-President of the Legislative Council in Geneva:

The changes across the Middle East should scare the Iranian regime that seeks to eliminate its main opposition. But what matters here is that 3,400 defenseless and unarmed men and women of Ashraf be saved today; because what are they doing? They refuse to surrender to this regime and are the targets of its barbarism and of its accomplices in Iraq. But the serious question now is what did the UN do and what is the UN doing? What will it do now? UN's inaction is not acceptable. UN's inaction violates all its obligations. We must repeat it, cry it, make it appear, and spread it everywhere. The UN and the High Commissioner have the responsibility to ensure Ashraf residents' protection until their complete transfer. Our demand is very clear and practical: Ms. Pillay, it is urgent! The protection of Ashraf is urgent! Take action now !



Marc Falquet, member of Geneva Parliament:

It should be noted that Camp Ashraf is in a great danger, and that people are left without defense. Everyone understands that. Apparently, two international institutions still have trouble to understand it: the UN and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which have been set up precisely for such cases. In Geneva, we are proud to have these institutions, we are proud to have the UN, the European representation, and the High Commissioner for Refugees. These institutions should not make us ashamed. But they begin to make us ashamed because of their inaction. This is unacceptable! It is true that we should encourage them, but at some point, we must bang our fists on the table! All the people who stand for freedom, all the people who are fighting against barbarism agree. How is it that the UN does not act? I do not see but a just cause: the cause of freedom, democracy and tolerance that is represented by Mrs. Rajavi.



Gianfranco Fattorini, Co-Chair of Movement against Racism and for Friendship among the Peoples (MRAP):

Not only the Iraqi authorities are not willing to protect camp's residents from the Islamic Republic of Iran's threats, but they are the perpetrators of serious human rights violations instigated by Iranian authorities. That's why the entire international community must assume its "responsibility to protect" by implementing all the means at its disposal to protect the physical safety of the residents of Camp Ashraf and to ensure that a long term solution for the residents' evacuation can be implemented. Most recently, the High Commissioner for Refugees decided to set up a procedure to assess

Ruth Wedgewood, Chair, International Law and Diplomacy, Jonh Hopkins University:

If you haven't seen the statement of the High Commissioner for Refugees, you should. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has indeed recognized that these folks are under United Nations legal protection. Camp residents who have submitted requests are, accordingly, now formally asylum seekers under international law whose claims require adjudication. And international law requires that they must be able to benefit from basic protection of their security and well-being. In plain English, that means "don't tread on me". There is now a bubble of, at least, UN promise around each person in Ashraf. So, I would put to you that at least in legal terms as well as moral terms each person in that camp now is under formal UN legal protection. Now on the idea of observers, they have been used in many prior situations. When Maliki says deadline, he means death. He's warning you in plain English what he intends to do on December 31st. And that's simply an unacceptable result. With the coining of R2P, responsibility to protect, at a minimum, it means a ruler has to treat his own citizens and resident aliens, anybody in his borders, decently and humanely regardless of domestic law. And R2P will not survive as a coherent, credible doctrine if in fact, in this case where there is salience, notoriety, pre-warning, voices of responsible bodies and people from the Congress and from Europe, if it's allowed in this case to be trammled as if it were cattle in the hands of a wolf. So I do think here that the lesson that should be sent respectfully to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and certainly to Mr. Maliki of Iraq is that this is a red line for the US, a red line for the UN, and one that really ought not to be crossed, both for his sake and for ours.



Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom:

Camp Ashraf actually seems to represent the schizophrenia of the UN... And we are seeing 3400 people who have laid down, have surrendered their arms and demanded international protection, and been told they would have it, sitting there waiting for the next massacre which will happen as soon as the deadline is up for them to be removed from the camp. And what is the solution to that? It is not the rhetoric that we are hearing coming from those over the corridors who are talking in Human Rights Council. I think that is the rhetoric from the Security Council who are not engaging sufficiently. The system is in place for that to happen; where is it? Why is it not working? It is the triumph for the politics over international law and we cannot allow that to happen otherwise international law will be denigrated. I would invite all of us in the room who are engaging with the Council and with the human rights mechanisms to put an additional pressure on the Human Rights Council to demand that there be a monitoring mission by the UNCHR and/or by the European Union and also to involved the Special Representatives, the Secretary General in prevention of genocide because it is not only of the prevention of genocide, it is on the prevention of mass violation of international humanitarian law. If we are serious about prevention, so let us use the mechanisms to make sure it does not happen.



the requests coming from the residents of Camp Ashraf. As a result, these people are now formally considered as asylum seekers protected by international law which require protection against expulsion or return to the country where their life or freedom would be threatened. This positive step should not overshadow the serious human rights violations suffered by residents of Camp Ashraf. We must make sure that the perpetrators of the massacres of July 2009 and April 2011 are prosecuted and that victims and their families can exercise their rights to compensation. That's why we continue to ask the High Commissioner for Human Rights to send a mission to investigate the massacres perpetrated by the Iraqi army and to establish at Camp Ashraf, together with UNAMI, a group monitoring human rights of residents.



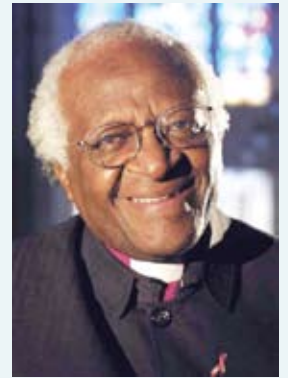
Message of Danielle Mitterrand:

They have invented for Ashraf all kinds of new virtual walls. First the wall of oblivion, then a wall of lies, then of silence, then of food and medical blockade. Finally, the wall of decibels and the wall of monitoring and electronic jamming. Technological progress has always emboldened the executioners' imagination. On the other side of these invisible walls, death lurks around the camp at all times and sometimes it enters with incredible violence. That of a manhunt where all shots are allowed; killing and letting die, abandon the wounded and take innocent and helpless hostages. When calm returns, the only thing left for the survivors is to mourn their dead and bury

them. Then energy comes back with the desire to live and the dream of a world of justice, ensuring peace and protection for all. In one camp, the matter is not to survive for oneself but for others ... We all know the wonderful example that little Chagayegh* gives us in her letter to Ms. Pillay. And that's what distinguishes the executioner from the victim, the jailer from the prisoner: some are preparing the future while others destroy the present. Preparing the future, dear and beloved friends of Ashraf, is the price of your sacrifice, but it is not the only one; we also have to add the example you set for all the oppressed, and the message of hope written with your blood that you are

Message of Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

Delivered by her daughter Nontombi Tutu, at the international meeting at the UN Headquarters in Geneva on Ashraf



I have in the past expressed my support for the people of Camp Ashraf. They have been granted protected status by both the United Nations and the multinational force headed by the United States and Iraq. Since responsibility for their protection has been transferred to the Iraqi military, the camp has experienced harassment by both Iranian and Iraqi forces. The attacks and harassment experienced by the residents of the camp are in fact human rights abuses that require condemnation from all freedom-loving people. Just this month, the UN High Commission for Refugees has declared its intention to consider individual applications for refugee status by residents of the camp. I ask the Iraqi Government and the international community to respect the integrity of this process, and to see to it that the residents of Camp Ashraf are ensured their safety and security, so that the UNHCR can fulfill its mandate in a safe and confidential location. I am Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town. September 20th, 2011, New York, New York.

Michel Joli, Secretary General of Mitterrand Foundation (France Libertés):

Danielle Mitterrand "shared for many years with the Iranian Resistance". It is indeed Mrs. Mitterrand, who first moved to Geneva after the massacre in Ashraf in July 2009 to meet personally Navi Pillay, the High Commissioner, to inform her of her deep concern about the high probability of other bloody attacks against Ashraf. Ms. Pillay was very sensitive to her message. But our alert, supported by other NGOs present today, could not prevent a second humanitarian disaster.



We all know that the Iranian regime is very upset about the impact of the Arab Spring. The same for the Iraqi government of Nouri al- Maliki, who has linked his fate to the ruling theocracy in Iran. That's why he insists on the closure of Camp Ashraf by the end of this year by any means. The recent statement by the UNHCR, which recognizes the rights of protection, therefore a status to Ashraf residents, is a significant but not sufficient safeguard to prevent further aggression. Thus, the sttlement of permanent UNAMI observers in Ashraf and the launching of an impartial and transparent investigation by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, that we had requested three years ago, have become indispensable measures to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe in Ashraf.

Nontombi Tutu, Human rights activist and the daughter of Archbishop Tutu:

As a South African raised under apartheid, in those days, as a young person, one of the things that I thought over and over and that my friends and family asked ourselves and one another was "when we are suffering like this, where is the rest of the world? Do they not care that our brothers and sisters are being arrested? Do they not care that our children are being killed on the streets? Where is the international community?" Today, we find ourselves in the same place, where the people of Camp Ashraf are asking us the very same questions. "Where are you? Where are you as we are suffering? Where are you as we are being killed?"



Today we know that oppressive regimes around the world know the boogeyman of today. Terrorism. So that if you can label your opposition "terrorist", the world will not ask questions of what you do to your people. And so the people of Camp Ashraf have been labeled terrorists, war criminals, even after investigation after investigation has shown that this is not true.

I know that Ms. Pillay is one whose heart is in the right place. And we are here to encourage her to move not just her heart but also the actions of the High Commission to protect the people of Camp Ashraf, to send a monitoring group to ensure the safety of Camp Ashraf.

