



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

London, 14 February 2013

PRESS RELEASE

BHRC CONDEMNS THE RECENT MISSILE ATTACK ON THE RESIDENTS OF CAMP LIBERTY

The Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC) condemns without reservation the recent missile attack on the residents of Camp Liberty, a former US base in Baghdad now housing several thousand former residents of Camp Ashraf. Over one hundred residents of Camp Liberty, unarmed Iranian refugees, suffered injuries during the attack on Saturday 9 February 2013. Some of the victims remain in critical condition.

BHRC joins the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, who strongly condemned this attack, as did the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, who described it as “a despicable act of violence”. Guterres emphasised that the residents of Camp Liberty are asylum seekers undergoing refugee status determination process and as such are entitled to international protection.

BHRC has been following this situation closely.

On 11 April 2011 BHRC condemned the excessive use of force by Iraqi security personnel against unarmed Iranian refugees at Camp Ashraf in Diyala province around 60 km north of Baghdad in Iraq. Camp Ashraf was home to approximately 3,400 Iranian refugees, including 1,000 women. The residents were shot at indiscriminately and attacked by Iraqi soldiers. At least 33 Camp members were killed, including 8 women. Over 300 people were injured, 178 of whom have sustained gunshot wounds, and several dozen were in a critical condition.

On 6 January 2012 BHRC expressed its deep concern at the decision of the Iraqi government to transform Camp Liberty, a former US base in Baghdad, into a temporary prison to house

Camp Ashraf residents. Only after receiving guarantees for their safety and security, did residents of Camp Ashraf agree to relocate to Camp Liberty.

The safety and security of the residents of Camp Liberty has been violated in the most egregious manner.

The BHRC calls for:

- The Iraqi authorities to urgently investigate this attack and bring the perpetrators to justice.
- The investigation must look into the conduct of Iraqi security forces before and during the attack, and whether they have failed to prevent the attack.
- The residents of Camp Liberty must have real, effective guarantees for their safety and security.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. On 11th April 2011 the BHRC condemned the excessive use of force by Iraqi security personnel against unarmed Iranian refugees at Camp Ashraf. See [statement](#).
2. On 6th January 2012 the BHRC expressed deep concern at the decision of the Iraqi government to transform Camp Liberty, a former US base in Baghdad into a temporary prison to house Camp Ashraf residents. See [statement](#).
3. The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (“BHRC”) is the international human rights arm of the Bar of England and Wales. It is an independent body concerned with protecting the rights of advocates, judges and human rights defenders around the world. The Committee is concerned with defending the rule of law and internationally recognised legal standards relating to human rights and the right to a fair trial. The remit of BHRC extends to all countries of the world, apart from its own jurisdiction of England & Wales. This reflects the Committee's need to maintain its role as an independent but legally qualified observer, critic and advisor, with internationally accepted rule of law principles at the heart of its agenda.

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BHRC website

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