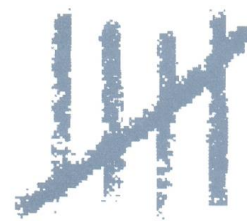


His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017
USA



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

London, 10 February 2015

Open letter RE: Inhumane conditions suffered by Iranian refugees at Camp Liberty, Iraq

Dear Secretary-General,

I am writing on behalf of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) to express our deep concern about reports of the inhumane conditions being suffered by the Iranian refugees residing at Camp Liberty in Iraq.

The Government of Iraq has consistently failed to meet its obligations to respect the humanitarian and human rights of these refugees and to provide them with security and protection as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2011 with UNAMI. As a result the refugees have been targeted by numerous deadly missile attacks.

The Iraqi authorities are also imposing a cruel medical siege on the camp, denying the refugees free access to medical services. This is contravention of article 14 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that Iraq ratified in 1971. As you will be aware this has prompted condemnation from international medical organisations who consider that the siege is putting the lives of the refugees at stake. It is believed that 23 people have died so far as a result of this medical siege. I also refer to Written Declaration No.587 of 30 January 2015, Doc. 13702, signed by many members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

BHRC has condemned on several occasions the attacks against unarmed refugees both at Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty, including those perpetrated by Iraqi security personnel and also militias affiliated to the then Prime Minister al-Maliki. We understand that a total of 136 residents have been killed in such attacks with many more wounded.

In addition to the constant fear of attack and the lack of access to medical care, the refugees face severe economic hardship. Despite the assurances given both by the UN and the US that the refugees could sell their moveable and unmoveable assets in Camp Ashraf, they have not been allowed to do so and, worse, many of them have had their property looted by militias affiliated with the Iranian regime without any protection from the Iraqi Government. The intention was that the assets in Camp Ashraf should be sold to provide necessary funds for relocating the residents.

Chair: Kirsty Brimelow QC | Vice-Chairs: Sudanshu Swaroop & Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh

In view of this deplorable situation we ask that Camp Liberty be recognised as a refugee camp under the supervision of the UN High Commission for Refugees. We note that the UNHCR already considers these refugees ‘persons of concern’ that are entitled to protection and we believe this further step would enable to them to be rightfully protected. We also call on the UN and international community to take necessary measures to ensure that the Iraqi Government puts an end to the siege on the camp and guarantees the refugees’ unrestricted access to medical services, and their right to be able to sell their assets.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kirsty Brimelow', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Kirsty Brimelow QC

Chair, Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC)

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 independent of the Bar Council and works to protect 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.