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International Committee of Jurists in Defence of Ashraf

Press Release

12 April 2010

ICJDA expresses its deep concern over the Iranian regime's new plot to take advantage of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) against the residents of Camp Ashraf in Iraq, home to members of the Iranian opposition People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran. It calls for adoption of measures to counter the regime's new plots against Ashraf.

On April 4, the website of the "Nejat Association branch in west Azerbaijan," a branch of the Iranian regime's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), published a report about a meeting between "Mr. Arman, the honorable representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)" and "more than 70 members of families of Nejat Association members in west Azerbaijan on November 5 and 6, 2009." The report said, "So far, the leaders of the Mojahedin (PMOI) have not made it possible for the representatives of the ICRC to meet with people in Ashraf."

The above-mentioned website quoted "Mr. Arman" as saying, "Regrettably, after the incident that took place in Camp Ashraf, our colleagues in Iraq's ICRC went to the camp on two occasions but, unfortunately, the Mojahedin (PMOI) did not allow them to meet with the residents in the camp. They (leaders of the PMOI) said that we must meet with them, as the representatives of the people in the camp. We went to Ashraf twice but they did not allow us to enter... Now we think that the Iraqi authorities may close down the camp; they have decided to do that, in this case the ICRC can easily go there." The website continued, "Since that date, the cruel officials of the Mojahedin in Camp Ashraf, in violation of all humanitarian norms, have not allowed Mr. Arman and other ICRC representatives to pass family photos and letters to people in Ashraf." (<http://www.nejatngo.org/fa/post.aspx?id=8978>).

Although we are not aware of "Mr. Arman's" role in the ICRC, but the aim of these lies by Tehran regime is to prepare the grounds for further crackdown on Camp Ashraf residents and to cause an even greater humanitarian catastrophe than on the deadly July 28 and 29, 2009 raid on Ashraf where 11 residents were killed, 130 disabled, 370 wounded, 1,000 badly beaten and 36 others taken hostage by the Iraqi forces.

Remarks by the "ICRC representative" in November 2009 is published five months later on the website while the MOIS has assembled a number of its agents (affiliated to the so-called Nejat Association), posing as family members of Ashraf residents, at the entrance gate of Ashraf for the past two months. With political and logistical support of the Iraqi government and forces, these agents are torturing the residents psychologically and provoke tension. From dawn to dusk and sometimes throughout the night, they threaten the residents of Ashraf with death and setting the place on fire and the repeat of July 2009 events. They shout in their speakers "Death to Mojahedin (PMOI)" and "long live Islamic Republic." Many of the agents have been dispatched by the MOIS branch in west Azerbaijan.

International Committee of Jurists in Defence of Ashraf

By taking advantage of the fluid transitional period after the Iraqi elections, the Iranian regime has intensified its pressures and plots against Ashraf and is trying to carry out its scheme of destroying it. The lies published in Nejat Association's website and the two-month long campaign outside Camp Ashraf are components of the same plan in this period.

Regrettably, this is not the first time that representatives of the ICRC are taking part in events organized by MOIS (Nejat Association) whose aim is to suppress and annihilate the PMOI, in particular the Ashraf residents. Khamenei's advisor had earlier stated that to dismantle the PMOI, they intend to use the ICRC to organize meetings between members of the PMOI and their families (The Financial Times, June 20, 2007).

The last time that a delegation from the ICRC visited Ashraf was on February 25, 26 and 27, 2009. After that, no delegation from the ICRC visited Ashraf. Therefore, no one could have possibly obstructed the ICRC delegation to visit Ashraf or speak to the residents. The ICRC did not even visit those killed or wounded after the brutal attacks of July 28 and 29. It was only on October 7, when the 36 Ashraf residents who had been taken hostage by the Iraqi forces returned to the camp, that two ICRC representatives accompanied them to Ashraf. They neither asked to see Ashraf and speak to the residents nor did they accept the invitation by the residents to stay for lunch in the camp and left immediately.

The ICRC - as its spokespersons admitted - had free access to Ashraf residents in their visits to the camp. Ms. Dorothy Krimitsas, the ICRC spokeswoman said in an interview on December 24, 2008 with the Persian service of the Radio Free Europe, Radio Farda, "Since three months ago till now we had visited Camp Ashraf three times and spoken to its residents and we transmitted their worries to the authorities about their fates should their protection by the forces of a government is transferred to the forces of another government ... It is possible for any one who wishes to contact the ICRC. Any one who wishes to meet with us privately and raise his/her points with us could do so."

The remarks attributed to the "ICRC representative" with regards to support for Iraqi government decision to close down Ashraf and displacement of the residents and reiterating that "in this case (closure of Ashraf) the ICRC can easily go there (Ashraf)" clearly unveils the intention of the mullahs by making such false claims. Any one with minimum knowledge of the Iranian regime's influence in Iraq would know that displacement of Ashraf residents would be a prelude and a pretext for their massacre.

All family letters to Ashraf residents delivered by ICRC have been handed over to persons concerned immediately although everybody knows well that the main motive behind writing these letters has been the MOIS and Nejat Association. Over the years, the families of Ashraf residents could exchange letters with their relatives in the camp and to contact with them and there was no need to use the ICRC services. This is an established fact that has been verified by the ICRC as well.

While the residents of Ashraf are under a cruel comprehensive siege at the behest of the Iranian regime and for the past 15 months their families and lawyers as well as the human rights activists have not been allowed into the camp and strict restrictions have been imposed on the entry of fuel, medicine and specialist doctors to Ashraf, we hope that the ICRC, by denying such false remarks, would not allow the clerical regime to take advantage of the organization to further suppress the Ashraf residents.

International Committee of Jurists in Defense of Ashraf