



Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., left, listens as Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., talks during a news conference on the situation at Camp Ashraf, Iraq, home to 3,400 members of Iranian exiles on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2009, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)



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(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)



Comité Français pour un Iran Démocratique

2172 French mayors condemn Iraqi government decision to forcibly relocate Ashraf residents

At a press conference in Paris on Tuesday, it was announced that 2172 mayors in France have signed a declaration condemning an Iraqi government decision to forcibly displace residents of Camp Ashraf, where some 3,400 Iranian opponents reside in Iraq.

Mayors stressed that any forcible relocation of the residents would be a prelude to their massacre and would spark a humanitarian catastrophe.

A number of the mayors who signed the declaration also appeared at the press conference chaired by Senator Jean-Pierre Michel and unveiled the initiative on behalf of their colleagues. They pointed out that aggression and pressures against Camp Ashraf by the Iraqi government take place in response to pressures exerted by the clerical regime in Tehran and are merely designed to placate that regime.

Committee in charge of Ashraf suppression insists on relocation of residents

At 11:30 on Tuesday, December 15, 2009, 37 police vehicles entered Camp Ashraf along with a number of Iraqi officials from the suppressive Iraqi committee called Committee for Closing Ashraf. Some 50 journalists, photographers, and videographers also entered Ashraf with the same contingent.

Ashraf residents did not preclude or resist the police's entry in any way and left all doors and buildings open for visits by the police, Iraqi officials and reporters.

Despite distribution of pamphlets, and constant invitations on loudspeakers by Iraqi officials in Ashraf's streets and in the presence of some 50 reporters, videographers, and photographers from various news agencies around the world, not even one resident expressed willingness to leave Ashraf.

At around 15:00 local time, Iraqi forces and officials left Ashraf, taking the journalists with them, even as many of the residents in Ashraf still demanded interviews with reporters.



Journalists' visit to Camp Ashraf

Iraqi officials also took journalists on Tuesday to a camp of Iranian exiles near the border, which they are planning to move. Iraq's new Shiite dominated government has announced plans to move their camp to the southwest of the country. The effort was met by derision by many of the group's members who shouted that they would not leave their camp.



Iran ex-rebels defy police orders to quit Iraq camp

Police toured the camp reminding residents over loudspeakers of the deadline set by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki for their departure for alternative accommodation in southern Iraq but they refused to leave.

Iraqi army Colonel Bassel Hamad told journalists: "Camp residents have been aware since October 19 that they are to be cleared out today and moved elsewhere while respecting international human rights standards. "If they refuse, a high committee will decide what measures to take and we will resolve the problem in a peaceful manner," he added.

"We have taken the decision to get them (the People's Mujahedeen) out of Iraq ... and the process of their moving to Neqrat al-Salman is a step on the way of taking them out of the country," he said.



Iraqi government: Iranian refugees to be moved from camp

More than 3,000 Iranian dissidents are set to be moved Tuesday from their refugee camp in northeastern Iraq to a hotel in Baghdad, the Iraqi government said Monday.

However, a spokesman for Camp Ashraf called any claim by the government of an agreement with residents "unfounded and untrue."



Iranian dissident group defies order to leave Iraq

CAMP ASHRAF, IRAQ An Iranian dissident group vowed Tuesday not to abandon its besieged camp north of Baghdad despite an Iraqi military ultimatum to pull up stakes or face an eviction that could turn bloody.

Iraqi security forces led a group of international journalists on a tour of the camp occupied by the Mujahedin-e Khalq, the first time authorities have allowed media to visit since a deadly raid on the compound last July.