



## INTERRELIGIOUS COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF PROTECTED PERSONS IN ASHRAF AND LIBERTY, IRAQ

*Dr. Carole R. Fontaine, Facilitator*  
Taylor Professor of Biblical Theology  
and History

*Dr. Monique Auguste, President*  
Women Advancing Freedom and  
Equality, Canada

*Ahlam Balazs, Legal Advisor*  
Barrister & Solicitor  
Board Member, Women Advancing  
Freedom and Equality, Canada

*Hon. David Kilgour, J.D.*

*Jennifer A. Shaw, General Secretary*

*Anahita Sami, Graduate Intern*

Interreligious Committee in Support  
of Protected Persons in Ashraf and  
Liberty, Iraq  
99 Herrick Circle  
Newton, MA 02459 USA

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Dear Secretary Clinton,

I am writing on behalf of the concerned members of the Interreligious Committee in Support of Protected Persons in Ashraf and Liberty, Iraq.

We are extremely concerned about the inhumane conditions under which the protected persons who are members of the PMOI are being detained in Camp Liberty as they are being forced to leave Camp Ashraf. As you know, your State Department has made the successful relocation of these protected persons a condition for delisting them as terrorists as the Federal Courts of the United States have directed the State Department to do. That being the case, it is all the more incumbent upon the United States and the United Nations to ensure that the conditions stated in the Memorandum of Agreement signed by all parties are honored – – this would include the provision of decent, safe, and humane conditions for those who are now being treated as prisoners rather than as protected refugees.

I recently had the opportunity to hear a talk by Mr. Tahar Boumedra, a United Nations official working with UNAMI in Iraq. Mr. Boumedra, a respected official and impartial observer for human rights in Iraq, made very clear that reports given by Iraqi government representatives concerning conditions and situations involving Camps Ashraf and Liberty are openly verifiable as lies. Not only did Iraqi officials pretend that no violence had taken place in Camp Liberty in recent years, they denied all knowledge of such activities on behalf of the Iraqi security forces. When Mr. Boumedra arrived, however, he was able to count the corpses lying unburied in the sun with his own eyes. He reported this widely to the international community, so that the State Department's continued reliance on self-reports by the Iraqi government can in no way be considered valid sources of information. In fact, we simply have enough evidence on all hands to know that the Iraqi government is lying and will continue to lie about both their current actions and their future intentions with respect to the Iranian dissidents who are now anxious to leave the country, and only wait to be delisted by your department in order to obtain visas to third-party countries.

Mr. Boumedra also made clear to us that he had seen personally with his own eyes groups of Iranian-influenced officials at the United Nations freely photoshopping and changing pictures which had emerged from Camp Liberty, to present an entirely false portrait of the conditions there. If the conditions at Camp Liberty are as the Iraqi government says, then why are no observers permitted inside the confines of the camp? At what point does the United States intend to honor its agreements with these people who are now at the

mercy of a government that is clearly in league with their long-time enemies who seek to take their lives? At what point does the United States intend to recognize that we are being lied to on every level about what is happening in Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty? Or is it the case that the United States is working hand in glove with those who are telling and propagating these lies? Is this why we do not act? Your State Department continues to assert that the United States has “national security interests” at stake in honoring its humanitarian agreements. Are these national security interests in fact referring to your department's intention to continue to lie and dishonor its agreements until all of these residents have been extradited, which has been strictly forbidden by international agreements?

Struan Stevenson, President of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq, cites a recent (July 26, 2012) report by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on the Iraqi Government and its treatment of the 2000 refugees, to which the State Department MUST respond:

*“The residents were subjected to humiliating searches, headcounts and long delays when they transferred from their former home in Camp Ashraf. They were denied personal belongings such as wheelchairs and medicines. They are now being held in appalling conditions with inadequate water, sewage facilities or electricity generation. They are denied the right to leave Camp Liberty, despite their recognised international status as asylum seekers and refugees. Lawyers and politicians have been denied access to Camp Liberty. The UN Working Group describes Camp Liberty as a prison in all but name, which is in direct contradiction to the assurances we have received in the European Parliament from the UN Special Representative in Iraq Martin Kobler and US State Department Ambassador Dan Fried, who have gone out of their way to support the Iraqi Government and criticise the Iranian residents in Ashraf and Liberty.*

*The UN report also comes in the wake of a leaked document which has exposed the fact that an offer to move residents from Camp Liberty to the Yamamah Hotel in Baghdad was in fact a trap. The hotel has been rented by the Iranian regime's embassy in Baghdad since the beginning of 2011. Had any of the Iranian dissidents from Camp Liberty moved there, they would have faced extradition to Iran and certain torture and execution. In such circumstances it is almost unbelievable that the UN Special Representative to Iraq – Martin Kobler and Ambassador Dan Fried both strongly recommended that even disabled residents should move from Camp Liberty to the Yamamah Hotel.*

*I and other senior members of the European Parliament are deeply disturbed by these reports and alarmed that a UN Working Group has now openly and directly contradicted its key special envoy in Iraq. These events reaffirm my determination to insist on UN and US intervention at the highest level to sort out this shambles, force the Iraqi authorities to fulfil their commitments to humanitarian treatment of the residents of Ashraf and Liberty and speed up the re-settlement of these people to safe countries outside Iraq. Until such assurances are received and evidence of their implementation on the ground can be witnessed, I will not recommend any further transfers from Camp Ashraf to Camp Liberty.”*

If you are unwilling to listen to honest United Nations officials, our own generals who are quite familiar with the people at Camp Ashraf, and the international community at large, then you must explain to us why Mr. Kobler has found the time and the ability to visit with Iranian officials in Iran, as though Iran should have a say in the final disposition of these dissidents? This is outrageously illegal, and in violation of every agreement that the United States in the form of its generals and diplomatic representatives have made in good faith with the residents of Ashraf and Camp Liberty. At

what point does our government and your agency feel obliged to honor the most basic laws of human decency?

We urge you to contact Mr. Boumedra and ask him personally about the information that he has presented to the international community. I believe you will find him a credible witness, a decent person, and a reliable source of information, one whose integrity cannot even be compared to the lies told by Iraqi and Iranian officials. Apparently, the State Department is determined to propagate these untruths as well in the legal proceedings where it has challenged the testimony of US generals who have served at Camp Ashraf, or those who have consulted on conditions at Camp Liberty. Do you not owe it to the women and young people and intellectuals of this dissident community to at least check on the validity of the facts that you are using to detain them as prisoners, and to deny them visas to third-party countries who are more than willing to make a home for them?

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Carole Fontaine  
Facilitator, Interreligious Committee in Support  
of Protected Persons in Ashraf and Liberty, Iraq

Jennifer A. Shaw  
General Secretary, ICSPALI