

Commemoration of One Year Since Massacre Of 52 At Camp Ashraf.

Hon. David Kilgour

Double Tree Hotel

Toronto

6 SEPT. 2014

All of us here today and many others around the world remain alarmed about the safety of approximately 3000 residents of Camp Liberty, who survived the attack of Maliki's forces a year ago on Ashraf:

We are concerned because:

1- All residents of the camp are protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention, but are now blockaded by the Iraqi government itself.

2- We are all in deep sorrow at the loss of 52 outstanding Iranians in Ashraf. We remind others again about the situation today in Camp Liberty, and the inhuman siege imposed on it by outgoing prime minister Maliki, no doubt at the demand of the Iranian regime. The situation needs to be addressed immediately. The first step should be the lifting of the siege, followed by the immediate relocation, even temporary, of all residents to safe third countries. Albania has most admirably accepted about 200 of them. This was the promise of the UN and US in forcing residents to move to Liberty from Ashraf.

3- Canada has a long tradition of offering both humanitarian assistance and asylum to people in need. We urge the Canadian government to match its commendable condemnation of human rights in Iran with practical measures, such as giving asylum to a reasonable number of Liberty residents.

4- On this day of remembrance, let us not forget that there are still seven residents who were abducted and taken hostage and whose fate is unknown.

5- If Iraq wants to avoid disintegration as a failed state, the first thing the new prime minister of Iraq should do is to end the meddling by the Iranian

regime in the country and to engage all minorities, including Sunnis and tribes, to face the barbaric Islamic State (IS). A new Iraq starts with the lifting of the vicious siege on Camp Liberty, allowing international observers to go in, and ensuring that the sick and wounded have access to medical services.

Maliki role in Crises

Recently, I noticed an important article on Nouri al Maliki in the New York Review of Books (Aug 15) by Jessica Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which included this:

What Prime Minister Maliki has done since taking office eight years ago is to systematically exclude and abuse Iraq's Sunnis. He has justified everything from denial of government resources to arbitrary arrest and torture on the grounds that he is fighting a war against terror. But he has pointedly failed to classify Shia violence...as terror. At the same time, he has put himself at the center of the state's power at the expense of its other institutions. Parliament is powerless and government ministries, the judiciary, and the security services are politicized and corrupt. The criterion for appointment is loyalty to Maliki, not competence. Lawless Shia militias, answerable only to their leaders, supplant the army and the police. Under various degrees of US pressure to change this behavior, Maliki has nonetheless US backing throughout, including through two reelections.

ISLAMIC STATE

The Islamic State (IS) was created by Sunni Muslims in Syria in early 2013, partly in response to systemic discrimination and government violence directed at mostly moderate Sunnis across Syria and Iraq. In Iraq, this campaign was directed by Maliki during all of his eight years as prime minister. How many Sunni lives is he responsible for in Iraq? How many more lives of differing faith communities were taken by IS there and in Syria as revenge for crimes Maliki did to Sunnis in Iraq?

Local Shiites were the first targets of IS atrocities, but they then stormed across northern Syria into Iraq in June, where government soldiers, unwilling to fight for Maliki's government, abandoned their equipment and fled.

According to a just-released United Nations report on IS war crimes,

Children have been present at the executions, which take the form of beheadings or shootings...Bodies are placed on public display, often on crucifixes...serving a warning to local residents.

IS fighters committed so many war crimes against civilians that the Obama administration was shamed into intervening quickly. About 400 U.S. advisors present in Iraq and American air raids have since helped Iraqi and Kurd soldiers to drive IS away from Iraq's largest dam. .

Iyad Madani, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, representing about 1.4 billion Muslims in 57 nations, denounced the IS forced deportation under the threat of execution of Christians, terming it a "crime that cannot be tolerated". Madani added, "(IS) ha(s) nothing to do with Islam and its principles that call for justice, kindness, fairness, freedom of faith and coexistence". Virtually all of the world's Muslims appear to reject IS's claim to speak for them.

The grand mufti of Egypt, Shawki Allam, one of the most senior Muslim authorities, wants everyone to refer to IS as "al-Qaida Separatists in Iraq and Syria". In Britain, Muslim leaders expressed "grave concern" at continued violence in their faith's name.

In a recent article, *The Master Plan: How to Stop IS*, Ross Harrison and Michael Ryan suggest that any viable solution will first require a leadership in Iraq that not only seeks to reintegrate Sunnis into the ruling structures of the country, but also has the capacity to rebuild the nation under a common, shared vision. Doing this will require that Prime Minister designate, Haider al-Abadi, not just acknowledge the differences between Sunni and Shia, unlike Maliki, but also appeal to what they have in common in terms of shared Arab and Iraqi identity.

There must also be recognition that the Kurds and other minorities would need clear benefits and respect for their own cultural identities and customs in a new Iraq.

The leadership of key Arab countries would need to be supportive of these efforts. Possible candidates would be Egypt's new President al-Sisi and the

Saudis, who are already bankrolling Egypt's efforts and have a major interest in weakening IS.

Egypt, therefore, would provide the political heft and the Saudis the financial means. They should be inclined to work with Sunni and Shia leaders, who are willing to challenge IS, in an effort to keep Iraq and Syria intact by creating a positive foundation for political, community and economic growth.

Conclusion

Today is the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the PMOI. Permit me to remind and congratulate all of you on the birth of a democratic, tolerant organization that for 50 years, has struggled hard to bring about freedom, democracy and human dignity for the Iranian people.

Thank you.
