

Nejat Newsletter

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Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights: NGO should facilitate safe MKO exit from Iraq

**Iran-Interlink,
January 27, 2008**

As concerted moves are getting underway in Iraq to deal with the foreign terrorist organisation Mojahe-din-e Khalq in that country, Iran-Interlink was invited to attend a meeting at the Ministry of Human Rights in Iraq today. In a visit to Iraq this weekend, Massoud Khodabandeh from Iran-Interlink met with senior officials at the Ministry to talk about the future of the Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq cult in that country.

During the three hour meeting, Massoud Khodabandeh expressed concern for the human rights situation of people involved in the Moja-hedin cult. The American Forces in Iraq have been given notice to evacuate Camp Ashraf and its surrounds before the land is returned to its rightful owner by a court. This means that over 3,000 people must be urgently re-located. American Military Police have already begun to empty the Temporary International Presence Facility (TIPF) which had been established adjacent to Camp Ashraf to house individuals wishing to

dissociate from the terrorist group. Around 800 former MKO members have been processed through TIPF. Over 500 have successfully accepted voluntary repatriation to Iran. Those who rejected this option were granted UN refugee status.

In December last year the American Military Police began to remove the remaining individuals from TIPF, driving them in small groups to nearby residential locations to make their own way. Mr Khodabandeh told the Iraqi Human Rights officials that although more difficult to achieve it would have been more effective to have removed the MKO members from Camp Ashraf first. This would allow anyone who wished to leave the cult to find a place of safety in TIPF and to seek refuge under US protection.

Mr Khodabandeh requested that the individuals involved in the evacuation of TIPF be provided immediate help. They must be afforded a safety net and not allowed to fall through the system to fend for themselves, he said. This would include around 100

people who remain at TIPF as well as those who have already left - some of these individuals are now in Iraqi prison, some in Turkish prisons and the remainder are fugitives whose whereabouts are unknown.

It was suggested that a NGO be established under the patronage of personalities and human rights charities in Europe and the Iraqi Human Rights Ministry. This would offer the US military appropriate help in dealing with the evacuation of TIPF and also Camp Ashraf within the framework of Iraqi law.

The officials at the Ministry of Human Rights gave a very clear answer saying that under no circumstances whatsoever would any member or former member of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organisation be allowed to remain on Iraqi soil. They gave two main reasons for this decisive position. Firstly, that the MKO have been responsible for the murder of many Iraqi citizens. Respect for the rights and memories of the families of these victims make it impossible for the MKO to continue any presence in the country.

(cont. p5)

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British Government answer to the 'Lords of Terror'

"...**Lord Malloch-Brown:** My Lords, I certainly concede the point that the organisation is led by a woman [**Iran-Interlink editor - the PMOI is led by a man, Massoud Rajavi, who is the sole decision maker in the organisation, Maryam Rajavi is only his lieutenant.**], but I will risk the wrath of a portion of this House when I say that despite that, and despite what it says about the rights of women, the PMOI was involved in numerous terrorist attacks for a very extended period. At the time of the second Gulf War, it was considered by coalition forces to be completely assimilated into the security apparatus of the Saddam Hussein regime. Indeed, we had to disarm the organisation to the extent of 2,100 tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces. Since then it has made no renunciation of terrorism and disarmed only in the face of pressure from coalition forces; so, despite what it has to say on women's rights, we are not convinced that in other regards this organisation has permanently renounced terrorism...."

Lords Hansard, February 4, 2008

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/80205-0001.htm>

Iran: People's Mujaheddin Organisation

2.51 pm

Lord Eden of Winton asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will make representations to the European Union to de-proscribe the People's Mu-

jaheddin Organisation of Iran.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Malloch-Brown): My Lords, the House will be aware that the People's Mujaheddin Organisation of Iran is currently on the domestic list of proscribed organisations. The House might also be aware that the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission recently determined that it should be removed from this list. Proscription at the EU level is based in part on the UK's domestic proscription. Her Majesty's Government are appealing the decision of the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission and the domestic proscription will remain in force until that appeals process is complete.

Lord Eden of Winton: My Lords, that Answer is disappointing, to put it mildly. Does the Minister accept that the findings of the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission were absolutely clear: that the PMOI is not concerned with terrorism? In those circumstances, why do the British Government persist in the policy of appeasement of the mullah regime, which has yielded no benefit whatever and is doing a grave injustice to the peace-loving people of Iran?

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, the noble Lord is, I think, aware that the POAC judgment turned around particular aspects of the decision. We continue to believe that the PMOI was responsible for a number of serious military attacks

over a very long period of time and that its disarming was entirely pragmatic—in the event of the coalition forces forcing it to disarm after the intervention in Iraq. We have seen no evidence that the organisation has publicly renounced violence and terrorism. We have to be consistent in our views of terrorists. When we like the people whom terrorists attack, we call them "terrorists"; when it is the civilians

5 Feb 2008 : Column 949 of Iran who are attacked, we have a bad habit of thinking of them as liberation fighters. Terrorism and its tactics are objectionable irrespective of the target.

Lord Archer of Sandwell: My Lords, will my noble friend confirm that in addition to the ruling of the European Court of First Instance and the judgment of POAC, after careful consideration of all the evidence, some years ago the American authorities in Iraq conducted a careful investigation into the allegation and concluded that it was totally without substance? Why do the Government cling so obstinately to a discredited allegation by a discredited Iranian Government?

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, I cannot confirm to my noble and learned friend the circumstances of the US investigation that he refers to, but I certainly can confirm that we will respect the outcome of the appeals process.

Lord Lloyd of Berwick: My Lords, can the noble Lord give us some further indication of what the grounds of appeal are?

British Government answer to the 'Lords of Terror'

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, the judgment arrived at was that the behaviours of the organisation really amounted to a separation from the use of terrorist tactics. We just believe that there has not been a clear enough renunciation of those tactics. Instead, we see the decision as a pragmatic one in the face of American and British force. Until we are convinced that the organisation has really foresworn those tactics, we continue to believe it to be a threat to civilians.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: My Lords, can the Minister assure us that the Government are consistent in their definition of terrorists? We have a great variety of exiled groups in London—Tamils, Kurds, people from the north and south Caucasus and so on. We host those groups, although a number of them support opposition groups in their own countries that are not always non-violent. Are the Government confident that that they are consistent in their approach?

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, the noble Lord raises a very important point. In the case of the Tamils, the LTTE is a proscribed organisation. It is quite difficult determining which groups in this country fall on which side of the line—and which support peaceful change in their countries and which support violent change and finance it. We look very carefully at that issue on a continuing basis.

The Earl of Onslow: My Lords, is not the noble Lord getting in a terrible muddle? Frankly, we supported violent revolution in Afghanistan when the Rus-

sians were there, Israel was set up by violent revolution, Ireland was set up by violent revolution and in South Africa we, to a certain extent, encouraged violence by the ANC. We cannot say that all violence against tyrannical regimes is wrong. We also supported the French resistance and the Dutch resistance in the war;

5 Feb 2008 : Column 950 Montgomery objected to that because he said it reminded him of Palestinian and Irish terrorists. Surely the Government are still in a muddle and ought to start thinking straight.

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, the noble Earl will understand that we have always objected, most recently in the case of Ireland, to unwarranted attacks on civilian targets. There is a big difference between military campaigns that fall within the Geneva conventions and the rest of international law and abusive campaigns that target asymmetrically civilians. I hope we have a consistent policy towards such groups.

Baroness Turner of Camden: My Lords, is my noble friend aware that the PMOI, which is led by a woman, Madam Rajavi, has an agenda for peaceful change via a political process, believes in a human rights agenda, including women's rights, and its policies are the sort that we should support?

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, I certainly concede the point that the organisation is led by a woman **[Iran-Interlink editor - the PMOI is led by a man, Massoud Rajavi,**

who is the sole decision maker in the organisation, Maryam Rajavi is only his lieutenant.], but I will risk the wrath of a portion of this House when I say that despite that, and despite what it says about the rights of women, the PMOI was involved in numerous terrorist attacks for a very extended period. At the time of the second Gulf War, it was considered by coalition forces to be completely assimilated into the security apparatus of the Saddam Hussein regime. Indeed, we had to disarm the organisation to the extent of 2,100 tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces. Since then it has made no renunciation of terrorism and disarmed only in the face of pressure from coalition forces; so, despite what it has to say on women's rights, we are not convinced that in other regards this organisation has permanently renounced terrorism.

Lord Harries of Pentregarth: My Lords, it was encouraging to hear the Minister say that Her Majesty's Government would accept the outcome of the appeals process. Can we accept that, as a clear implication of that, Her Majesty's Government will accept that this organisation should no longer be a proscribed terrorist organisation?

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, one must always fight terrorism in the context of the rule of law and respect for judicial decisions. One stoops to the standards of one's terrorist opponents if one does otherwise. We will fully respect the decision of the appeals process.

Canadian Government says Parents of Girl Trapped in Rajavi cult are in danger

(My parents' lives are at risk , I hold Mojahedin Khalgh accountable for their safety)

Mohammad Mohammadi,
January 12, 2008

<http://toeme.blogfa.com/>

Today at 16:10pm I was informed by Canadian government that according to Iraqi government my parents , Mostafa Mohammadi and My mom, Mahbubeh (Hamzeh) Mohammadi, are not safe any more in Iraq and asked Canada to help

them to be transferred to a safe country. The Canadian agent expressed the gov-



ernment's concern on their safety.

Due to conspiracy for failed attempt to abduct my parents in front of Ashraf by Mojahedin Khalgh on Dec 7, 2007, my parent are

making tireless efforts to bring Mojahedin before the justice very soon. Mojahe-din try to terrorize the process of the court for hearing on assault and abduction charges.

Mojahedin offered bribe to the TV station reporter and his boss no to air the report on Somaye and my parents anymore. The offer was rejected by the Al-Iraqi TV .

My parents lives are at risk , I hold Mojahedin Khalgh accountable for their safety.

Those who fought their own people

A documentary aired by the Swedish Television

The terrorist group MKO was spying for the US during the Iran-Iraq war, gathering intelligence on Iran's nuclear program, a new report says.

Press TV, January 14, 2008

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=38640§ionid=351020101>

A documentary aired by a Swedish TV channel, has also revealed that the MKO also involved in espionage operation on behalf of

ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

According to the documentary, the Iraqi dictator had equipped the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) with sophisticated gadgets to pave the way for their terrorist acts against the

The movie depicts US Undersecretary Nicholas Burns declining to answer the question that if Washington is using the MKO for intelligence gathering.

An MKO leader has recently



Iranian nation.

The one-hour historical documentary said that the MKO was blacklisted as a terrorist group for attacking a number of American nationals in Iran.

revealed that the group is providing the US with the intelligence 'necessary to protect US troops in Iraq.'

The group moved to Iraq during Saddam's regime and assisted the Baath Party in the massacre of thousands of Iraqis.

Iraqi TV documentary about MKO's Canadian Hostage in Iraq

Al-Iraqia TV, Iraq,

January 10, 2008

Al-Iraqia TV broadcasted a documentary about two Canadian citizens, Mostafa and Mahboobeh Mohammady, who have gone to Iraq in an attempt to rescue their daughter from Mojahedin Khalq Organisation terrorist cult currently under protection of US army in Ashraf camp North of Baghdad.



The full translation of this film will be posted shortly.

We have now received a copy of this documentary.



Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights: NGO should facilitate safe MKO exit from Iraq (cont. from p1)

Secondly, and perhaps more urgently, the MKO remains directly attached to the Baath Party and former members of Saddam Hussein's regime. Should amnesty be given to any MKO and they escape, they would pose a danger to Iraq. They have been trained by Saddam Hussein's Republican Guards and maintain the potential to perform terrorist acts anywhere in Iraq.

which has resulted in indictment papers and arrest warrants being issued against the three leading MKO members in Iraq, Abbas Davari, the MKO's political liaison official in Camp Ashraf, Mozghan Parsaii, the Commander of Rajavi's army in Iraq and Sediqeh Hoseini, the Secretary General of the MKO, in three separate courts including the Baghdad Criminal Court.

Iraqi Government would under no circumstances have any direct contact with anyone from the MKO or even former members of the MKO in Iraq. All of these people must leave Iraq. However, Ministry officials conceded that they are willing to work with appropriate human rights organisations as well as Iran-Interlink and its representatives to provide temporary help and to facilitate the safe removal of these people.



To compound this decision, officials pointed out that the case of the Mojahedin has now been moved from the jurisdiction of the Government of Iraq to the Iraqi Judiciary which now has the task of making ruling judgements on the group and its members.

This is a highly significant step as it takes the MKO out of the political arena and places the future of the group in a legal framework. In this framework judgement has already been reached by several judges

The Human Rights Ministry officials said Iraq's Government will demand the US hand over these individuals, stressing that US refusal to comply with Iraqi law will not reflect positively on the US presence in that country. This would not be a political decision but is based on the separate findings of three Iraqi judges. The Judiciary will send police to arrest the individuals concerned.

The meeting concluded with the Iraqi Human Rights Ministry again stressing that the

The officials gave permission for an NGO to be established to offer humanitarian emergency aid to those who will be evacuated from the camps. The Ministry of Human Rights would work with the NGO to de-brief individuals from the MKO and to help reunite them with their families. Temporary places of refuge will be established to help these people. For any who request repatriation to Iran, the Ministry and the International Committee of the Red Cross would jointly guarantee that their human rights would not be violated. However, if third countries were sought, the NGO must find these itself.

Seminar on Releasing Captives of MKO Terrorist Cult

Nejat Society, 11th of January 2008

A seminar on the subject of how to release the members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) who are held both mentally and physically captive in the Ashraf Camp in Iraq was highly attended by the families in the city of Shiraz despite the cold and snowy weather. The families of the members of the MKO who anxiously desired visiting their beloved ones after so many years had gathered in this seminar organized by the Nejat Society in the city of Shiraz on 11th of January 2008 in the Red Crescent Hall of that city.



Mr. Ebrahim Khodabandeh, Mr. Kambiz Bagherzadeh, and Miss Ronak Dashti the former members of the MKO delivered speeches in this seminar. Mr. Khodabandeh while describing the common methods used by all cults to manipulate and to brainwash the followers, gave some examples on practices applied within the MKO cult and referred to the subjects such as the family relationship, the emotional feelings, expressing opinions, make of choice, thinking independently, showing excitements, and presentation of caring, to be highly restricted and are considered as unforgivable sins. He emphasized that according to the MKO's ideology all fondness and emotions must be entirely directed towards the leadership. He explained that inside the MKO

everyone is held responsible against the leadership while he is considered as impeccable.

Mr. Khodabandeh mentioned the efforts made by the families within the framework of the Nejat Society to organize meetings with their beloved ones held in Iraq. He clarified that restoring the family emotions could lead to the savior of the member from the psychological boundaries the person is held in.



Mr. Bagherzadeh referred to all mistreatments and confinements applied against discontented members inside the MKO and underlined that although his brother was in the same base with him but he did not see his brother for more than one and a half years.



Miss Dashti another former member of the MKO who had some bitter experiences while residing in the Ashraf Camp in Iraq explained how his brother and her were deceived by the MKO to be taken to Iraq and to the Ashraf Camp and how she was finally released thanks to the efforts made by her mother who traveled to Iraq and demanded the visit with his daughter. She described how the families could play a major roll to try to free their beloved ones from captivity. She described that giving high commanding positions to the women is a sham gesture taken

by the MKO while the truth is that women are expected to work even harder than men and their emotions are also systematically suppressed more. She clarified that members are expected to dislike whoever they adored before particularly the



members of their family. She also explained that all discontented members are labeled as being metal cases. Miss Dashti also referred to the high level of dissatisfaction amongst the forces inside the Ashraf Camp who find no way out.

The hatred amongst the families in the hall of seminar was to the extent that they started shouting and cursing Mas'ud Rajavi the leader of the MKO who has caused all these miseries for the families and their beloved ones.



In the end the families wrote separate letters of request to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Iraqi government demanding the arrangement of a visit with their beloved ones by their own expenses without the presence of any third party as soon as possible.

The core slogan of the seminar was: "the release of our children from the boundaries of the MKO terrorist cult and arranging a visit between the families and their beloved ones"

Massoud Khodabandeh replies and "Aseyassah" explains

Aseyassah,

February 07, 2008

http://alseyassah.com/news_details.asp?nid=3713&snapt=الدولية



Anne Khodabandeh, who is of British nationality and the wife of the Iranian Massoud Khodabandeh, replied to the article published by "Aseyassah" on the first of this month under the heading "Iraqi warnings from the agent of the Iranian regime by the name of Massoud Khodabandeh", in a letter sent to the cultural office at the embassy of the State of Kuwait in London, of which "Aseyassah" has received a copy. In the reply, Massoud says that "the article was slanderous and defamatory to my good name and unfortunately its anonymous writer did not try to contact me by email or by telephone or at my address in Britain, or at the Centre de Recherches sur le Terrorisme in Paris where I work". He refers to the scurrilous accusation made by the remnants of the Baathist regime in Iraq which links his name and his wife's name to the Iranian intelligence services - which is completely untrue and there is not a shred of evidence for the lies which appear in that article.

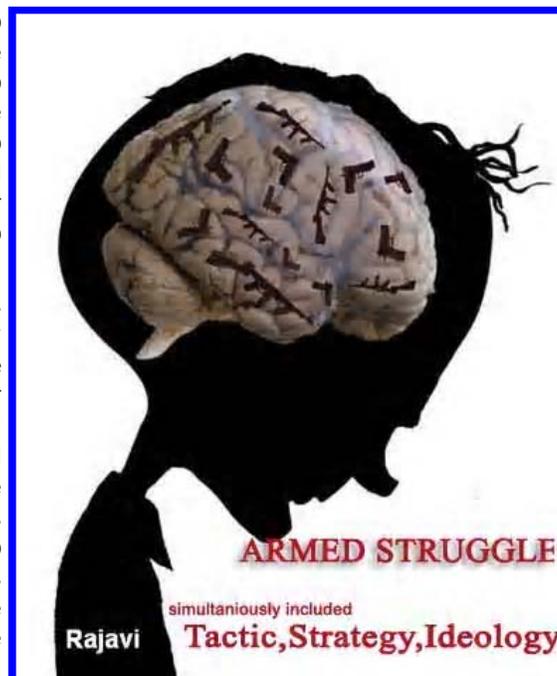
He also gives the reason why it was published. Mr Khodabandeh explains that

he lives in the United Kingdom and is currently visiting Iraq at the invitation of government officials, and was invited in order to attend various meetings on the issue of foreign terrorist groups in Iraq. He adds that "in the course of this work I have regular contact with the US army and relevant humanitarian bodies and I am seeking ways to rescue people from the hands of the Saddamists in Diyali province". He considers that "as all Kuwaiti citizens know all too well, the "Mojahedin-e Khalq" organisation acted as Saddam's private army in Iraq and helped to crush the Kurdish uprising in 1991 at the end of the first Gulf war. The Iraqi Government is now determined to remove all remnants of the Baathist regime, including the Iranian foreign terrorist group "Mojahedin-e Khalq", from its territory". He adds "I have travelled to Iraq to help those people who want to leave the group to find refuge and return to their families and to normal life."

He concludes by saying that readers of the newspaper "Aseyassah" will understand now why the Saddamists have tried to blacken his name and he states that the

paper's editors have acted properly in giving him the right to reply.

In this connection, it is important for "Aseyassah" to explain to Mr and Mrs Khodabandeh and to our readers that what was published on the first of February was an announcement and not an article and it was not simply ascribed to anonymous sources but it made clear in it that it was an announcement issued by the "League of Iraqi Academics and Educationalists" and it is important to explain that the accusations made by the League that Mrs Ann and her husband are "working in the service of the Iranian security services in Iraq and that they are carrying out the tasks of the Iranian regime under false pretences" were accusations carried by "Aseyassah" but not espoused by it, as was stated in the announcement itself.



'MKO! Let our children go!'

Sat, 26 Jan 2008



The families of several members of Mojahedin Khalq Organization on an Italian TV program call for their children to return.

The program, called 'La Rubrica Politica Estera', was aired by Italy's state broadcaster RAI1 on Friday. At the beginning of the program a number of Iranian families were shown holding pictures of their deceived children, asking for them to be allowed to return

to Iran.

Following those images, the commentator of the program explained that the MKO are communists who were supported by the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and later fled to Europe and the United States.

The commentator continued that the Mojahedin separated many families by using persuasion techniques similar to those of pol pot, the former communist head of Cambodia. The program pointed out that many of the terrorist organization's staff and senior members have told unsettling tales

of insanity about the time they spent cooperating with the group.

According to RAI, MKO's former financial head has revealed that members of the group live in absolute poverty and in the absence of their families, while the organization's leader, Mas'oud Rajavi and his wife Maryam, live lavishly.

The program said that the group currently seeks to steer the dispute over Iran's nuclear issue to more dismal corners by writing a letter to the US following the January 4 Strait of Hormuz naval incident.

UK not convinced at claim MKO has renounced terrorism

IRNA, February 06, 2008

<http://www2.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-20/0802062091155142.htm>

Foreign Office Minister Lord Malloch-Brown says that the British government is not convinced at that the Mujahideen-e Khalq has given up terrorism, saying its forced disarmament by US forces was "entirely pragmatic."

During the Iraq war, the MKO was "considered by coalition forces to be completely assimilated into the security apparatus of the Saddam Hussein regime," Malloch-Brown said.

"Indeed, we had to disarm the organization to the extent of 2,100 tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces. Since then it has made no renunciation of terrorism and disarmed only in the face of pressure from coalition forces," he said.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown confirmed in December that the British government would not deproscribe the MKO, saying

there was "no evidence" it had changed and that it was "certainly the case it has been involved in terrorist activity."

Speaking during a House of Lords debate, the Foreign Office minister added that there was also "no evidence that the organization has publicly renounced violence and terrorism."

"We have to be consistent in our views of terrorists," he told supporters of protracted attempts to have the MKO removed from Britain's domestic list of proscribed organizations, suggesting they had been falsely influenced.

"When we like the people whom terrorists attack, we call them 'terrorists,' when it is the civilians of Iran who are attacked, we have a bad habit of thinking of them as liberation fighters," Malloch-Brown said.

"Terrorism and its tactics are objectionable irrespective of the target," he said. The MKO was "responsible for a number of serious military attacks over a very

long period of time," he said without listing the hundred of Iranians killed in terrorist assassinations.

"There is a big difference between military campaigns that fall within the Geneva conventions and the rest of international law and abusive campaigns that target asymmetrically civilians. I hope we have a consistent policy towards such groups," the minister added.

"Its disarming was entirely pragmatic-in the event of the coalition forces forcing it to disarm after the intervention in Iraq," he emphasized.

Malloch Brown also said that despite its claims on supporting women's rights and being led by a woman, "we are not convinced that in other regards this organization has permanently renounced terrorism."

"Until we are convinced that the organization has really foresworn those tactics, we continue to believe it to be a threat to civilians," he said.

Former MKO seeking refuge in western countries

Javad Firuzmand interviewed by Mehrdad Farahmand



**BBC Persian Service,
January 26, 2008**

The military coalition under the US commandment in Iraq confirmed that some MKO members have left this organisation and their base in Iraq.

Confirmation of this news takes place after some reports were published indicating that in the past few weeks the efforts of dozens of former MKO to escape Iraq and seek refuge in western countries have failed and many of them are left hanging around in Iraq where they are in a very desperate situation.

In the past four years since Iraq was occupied by the US forces and its allies, some MKO members gradually left this organization and Camp Ashraf which is their base in Iraq.

The US army which is guarding Camp Ashraf during this period, kept the dissidents under its own protection in a camp near to this base. As the press office of coalition forces under the US command has informed the BBC, during the last four years 380 individuals of MKO have returned to Iran at their own request. But those dissidents who did not wish to return to Iran despite the efforts made by the United States did not gain the confirmation of any country for their application for refuge.

Meanwhile, reports indicate that within the last few weeks, dozens of them decided to leave the camp they were living in which was protected by the US forces and try to leave Iraq through different ways but this effort was unsuccessful for most of them and they returned to the camp protected by the US forces. Some were arrested after

crossing the Turkish border and returned to Iraq, a few managed to remain in Turkey or go to Greece illegally.

The Society for Defending Immigrants and Iranians in France (ARIA) tries to help the MKO dissidents to leave Iraq and settle in another country. According to this society 208 MKO dissidents were staying in the US camp up to last month. The press office of the US forces today gives their number at 110. Javad Firuzmand, the spokesman of ARIA society who himself has left the MKO says that this number had reduced to 50 last week and the number 110 indicates that some of those who had left there have returned to the US camp.

Mr Firuzmand told the BBC that 70 of the dissidents tried to go to Turkey after they left the Americas with the aid of some smugglers, but the Turkish border police arrested them and after one month in prison and remaining in compulsory camp were handed over to the Iraqi Police. One of these people was shot and wounded by the border police and is in hospital now in the city of Arbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan. The spokesman of ARIA society says that the autonomous government of Iraqi Kurdistan is keeping the people who were handed over by the Turkish police in a temporary camp in Arbil. But some of these people tried again to cross the Turkish border. Ten of them were arrested again by the Turkish police and handed over to Iraqi police and they are now in prison in Arbil. Amongst those who managed to cross the border ten were able to reach Greece with the aid of smugglers and 15 are living covertly in Istanbul and Ankara and Van in Turkey.

According to Javad Firuzmand, the MKO dissidents who are staying in Turkey could not approach the Human Rights and Turkish organizations since if they are revealed they would be arrested and returned to Iraq. The ten who stay in Greece are also in covert situation in that country. The ARIA society spokesman added that about 15 individuals approached Jordan and

there is no information about the destiny of other 8.

The BBC's effort to contact the UNHCR to obtain information about the destiny of these MKO dissidents did not reach anywhere but enquiries are still ongoing. The ARIA society which is a human rights establishment defending Iranians has demanded help for these people and the chance to live legally in European or other free countries. During the last four years some MKO dissidents have returned to Iran - the press office of forces under US command in Iraq gives their number at 380. Javad Firuzmand, the spokesman of ARIA society says that these individuals are living and working in several Iranian cities and are freely active in the society and he himself is in contact with some of them. According to him, inside Camp Ashraf which is still run by the MKO, some 200 individuals have left the MKO too. These people are not willing to move to the American's camp and they are kept in a separate place inside Ashraf. Mr Firuzmand says that these people also seek refuge from western countries.

Camp Ashraf was established in 1986 after MKO leader [Massoud Rajavi] moved from France to Iraq and the members of this organisation launched an armed struggle against Iran benefiting from the military facilities given by Saddam Hussein's regime. They participated in military operations against Iran during the Iran Iraq war. This base is situated in the district of Khalis in the province of Dyala in the east of Iraq and the coalition forces under US command have given the total number of individuals living there as 3360. The United States designated the MKO as a terrorist organisation but according to international regulations and Geneva Convention, they are kept under the entity of "protected persons".

The Iranian government demands that Camp Ashraf be dismantled and all MKO members be expelled from Iraq and accuses the Americans of protecting them in order to use them against Iran.

Terrorists in search of identity

Straits Times
Robert Karniol
Defence Writer
February 4, 2008



THEY are Iraq's forgotten terrorists, more than 3,000 fighters of the Mujahideen-e Khalq (MEK) languishing at one of their former military camps some 100km north of Baghdad.

'They are definitely in a legal limbo. No one wants them,' said Mr Said Boumedouha, a researcher at Amnesty International in London. No one, that is, except Iran. The MEK, also known as the MKO or the People's Mujahideen of Iran, is described as an Islamic Socialist group that advocates the overthrow of Iran's government. Founded in Teheran in 1965, it opposed the rule of Iran's shah, but was violently suppressed after the Iranian revolution as it was viewed as a threat by Ayatollah Khomeini's newly established regime.

With its headquarters relocated to Iraq in 1986, the MEK fought with Saddam Hussein's forces in the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988. They were organised as a conventionally armed brigade with an estimated fighting strength of 6,000 to 8,000 personnel. In mid-1994, Iraq's Ministry of Defence announced that these fighters had been formally integrated with the country's armed forces.

The MEK is designated as a terrorist organisation by the United States, the European Union and several individual countries - in part, it seems, because of anti-Western attacks and assassinations before the Iranian revolution. Teheran also views the MEK members as terrorists and has sought their extradition from Iraq.

There have been efforts to lift the yoke of this designation,

including a 2002 call to end the US proscription signed by 150 members of Congress. In fact, some have suggested that Washington originally tagged it as a terrorist group in 1997 as a gesture to Iran's newly elected reformist president.

The US proscription nevertheless remains in place, and the EU Council continues to blacklist the MEK despite a December 2006 ruling by the European Court of Justice that overturned Brussels' edict freezing MEK funds.

There are currently some 3,360 MEK members at Camp Ashraf, located in Iraq's Diyala province. About 110 others are defectors seeking refugee status and residing at the Ashraf refugee camp. Some have been voluntarily repatriated to Iran, claiming they were forced to join the MEK after being taken prisoner by Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says it has helped in the repatriation of 255 former fighters, most recently just this month, but the US-led Multinational Force in Iraq provides a figure of 380.

Though part of the Iraqi army, the MEK effectively declared itself neutral when coalition forces invaded the country in March 2003, and surrendered without a fight after suffering a few air attacks. But there is some confusion concerning its subsequent status.

'The MEK were never captured or classified as prisoners of war (under the Third Geneva Convention). 'Protected person' status (under the Fourth Geneva Convention) was granted as part of a ceasefire agreement negotiated between the US and MEK,' explained Major Winfield Danielson, a press officer with coalition forces in Baghdad. 'Each member of the MEK was required to sign a document renouncing violence and

agreeing not to take up arms. The MEK was also disarmed.' However, this is contradicted by earlier statements that MEK members' status was changed from 'prisoners of war' to 'protected persons' in June 2004.

'The change in their status is linked to the change of authority (on June 28, 2004, when an interim government assumed control of Iraq). It was also prompted by a process that saw each individual disarm and renounce violence,' Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Johnson, a US spokesman for detainee operations in Iraq, told me at that time.

The shift is curious in either case. 'Protected person' status applies to civilians, whereas the MEK personnel were uniformed soldiers in an established army - and affiliated with a proscribed terrorist group at that. 'It is not the responsibility of the ICRC to independently determine their status,' said ICRC official Dorothea Krimitsas in an e-mail from Geneva. The ICRC has never visited Camp Ashraf due to security concerns. But the coalition would contend that this may be unnecessary as the MEK members are not being detained.

'Neither the active MEK members nor the former MEK refugees are being detained,' said Major Danielson. 'The Ashraf refugee camp refugees have every right to depart and travel in Iraq using an Iraqi-issued laissez-passer. They can also repatriate to Iran if they desire, or they may stay in the camp.'

'The active MEK members who live in Camp Ashraf have 'protected persons' status. As part of the ceasefire agreement, they may travel outside the city of Ashraf but must do so under the protection of coalition forces.'

Nor are MEK members at Camp Ashraf facing criminal

Terrorists in search of identity

charges, with Major Danielson noting that 'they are not charged with criminal offences'. This appears peculiar in view of existing laws in the US and elsewhere that criminalise support for terrorist organisations.

According to the US State Department, for example: 'It is unlawful for a person in the US or subject to the jurisdiction of the US to knowingly provide 'material support or resources' to a designated Foreign Terrorist Organisation.'

As prisoners of war, the MEK personnel would have to be 'released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of hostilities', according to Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention. For 'protected persons' under the Fourth Geneva Convention 'internment shall cease as soon as possible after the close of hostilities', accord-

ing to Article 133.

The ICRC maintains that the Iraq war ended with the transfer of sovereignty to the country's interim government in June 2004, with the fighting since then characterised as 'an internal conflict internationalised by the presence of multilateral forces'.

The coalition argues that the MEK personnel at Camp Ashraf are not being detained. But nor are they wandering about or relocating.

'Our position is that they shouldn't be returned to Iran due to the fear of torture and the death penalty. And they shouldn't be handed over to Iraq for the same reason,' said Amnesty's Mr Boumedouha. 'Their immediate future looks bleak.'

In this context, Mr Boumedouha sees the US-led coalition's oversight of MEK per-

sonnel at Camp Ashraf as something of a humanitarian act in keeping with the 'protected persons' provision. If that is the case, the coalition is upholding the spirit of the Fourth Geneva Convention but perhaps not its legal mandate, as Article Six states: 'In the case of occupied territory, the application of the present Convention shall cease one year after the close of military operations.'

However, some have suggested an alternative interpretation of the coalition's treatment of the MEK people.

Unconfirmed allegations have surfaced in Teheran and elsewhere that the US Central Intelligence Agency is using the MEK for covert operations in Iran. Teheran failed to respond to a request to substantiate these claims.

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Mojahedin-i Khalq terror group engaged in hostile action toward the US forces

... It also shows that the Mojahedin-i Khalq terror group engaged in hostile action toward the US forces, but also were granted a truce in 2005. The MEK is an Iranian terror group that has killed civilians inside Iran and was given a base in Iraq by Saddam Hussein...



Juan Cole,
February 06, 2008

<http://www.juancole.com/2008/02/hot-pursuit-into-syria-iran-had-been.html>

(Juan Cole is President of the Global Americana Institute)

Hot Pursuit into Syria,

Iran, had been authorized;

US Kills Innocents at Adwar

Mass Grave with 50 Bodies Found at Samarra

The Bush administration authorized [hot pursuit of Iraqi Baathists into Syria and Iran](#), according to a just-released document at wikileaks. The document also reveals that as late as 2005, the US military authorities were still unaware that the "mobile weapons labs" were a Neocon scam and never existed. (Biological weapons labs require a clean room, difficult to install on a winnebago).

The document shows that by 2005, the US military had a de facto truce with the Mahdi Army (a paramilitary whose political

party parent actually joined the Iraqi government later that year).

It also shows that the Mojahedin-i Khalq terror group engaged in hostile action toward the US forces, but also were granted a truce in 2005. The MEK is an Iranian terror group that has killed civilians inside Iran and was given a base in Iraq by Saddam Hussein. US Neoconservatives have tended to support it and to want to use it to do further terrorism against Iran. The MEK has been defended by Patrick Clawson of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (the think tank of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and by notorious Islamophobe and Giuliani adviser Daniel Pipes. [Danny Postel explains cogently](#). In other words, key figures in

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Mojahedin-i Khalq terror group engaged in hostile action toward the US forces

the Israel lobbies support a terrorist group that has fired on US troops.

[US forces raided the village of Ad-war south of Tikrit](#) on Monday, and appear to have mistakenly killed an Awakening Council fighter, a woman and two children, wounding another girl as well. It may be that they were baited into firing on the family by anti-American guerrillas. This mistake is the second such in recent days, and adds to a strain felt between the Sunni Arab Awakening Councils and their American patrons.

[The LAT reports on how difficult it has been for the US military to root out the Salafi Jihadi extremists from Diyala province.](#)

[Sawt al-Iraq reports in Arabic that hundreds of Iraq's actors and performers](#) staged a demonstration on Sunday in front of the national theater in Baghdad to protest their loss of livelihood and dire economic straits. They called on Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to improve their incomes just as he had for government employees. Unlike US screenwriters, they can't even go on strike-- they are already largely unemployed.

[Reuters reports](#)

[political violence on Monday:](#)

'SAMARRA - Iraqi police and members of a neighborhood police unit found a mass grave containing about 50 bodies in an area west of Samarra, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. Security forces had been searching for al Qaeda fighters when they found a house with 10 people inside who had been kidnapped from the area. Some of those inside led police to the grave. Three car bombs were also found.

KHALIS - Six suspected militants were killed during operations by U.S. forces targeting al Qaeda near Khalis, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad. Three died when one of the suspected militants detonated a vest packed with explosives. Another three were killed by U.S. soldiers in a nearby building.

[Taji] - One member of a neighborhood police unit and a civilian were killed by a suicide bomber close to an internet cafe at Taji, 20 km (12 miles) north of Baghdad, a local tribal leader said.

[McClatchy adds: Baghdad](#)

Two civilians were injured in an IED explosion that targeted an American convoy in Palestine Street east Baghdad around 12:00 pm.

Police found four bodies in Baghdad today. Three bodies were found in Ru-

safa, the eastern side of Baghdad in the following neighborhoods (1 body in Ur, 1 body in Jisr Diyala and 1 body in Shaab). The fourth body was found in Washash neighborhood in Karkh, the western side of Baghdad.

Misan

Three officers in the Iraqi army were killed by gunmen in three different neighborhoods in Umara city south of Baghdad today morning. The first officer was a colonel who was a Lieutenant Colonel who was killed in al Askari neighborhood downtown Umara city. The second officer was a Major who was killed in the new buildings neighborhood downtown [A]mara city while the third officer was Lieutenant who was killed in his car while he was returning back home in al Uroba neighborhood downtown [A]mara city.

Anbar

A source in the Sahwa council of Sheikh Sanad said that three members of the Sahwa were killed and five others were injured when a suicide bomber wearing an explosive vest detonated himself near one of the check point of the Sahwa office of