

ParsBrief

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Nejat Society Letter to The President of Higher Judicial Council

Honorable Modhat Al-Mahmood
Chief Justice of Federal Supreme Court
President of Higher Judicial Council
Baghdad, Iraq

Your Excellency!

We the signatories of the present text would wish to draw your good attention to the subject described below and request you to add this document to the case dealing with the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organisation (MKO) in Iraqi judiciary system. We do appreciate and thank you for your sincere cooperation beforehand.

Initially we must introduce ourselves as former members of the MKO who have been active in this organisation in Iraq for some periods. This organisation was officially and practically involved in terrorist and suppressing activities from Iraq as well as inside Iraq in different forms from June 1986 (when Massoud Rajavi and other MKO leaders moved from Paris to Baghdad) to April 2003 (when Saddam Hussein was toppled after the invasion of Iraq); although the relationship between this organisation and the former dictator of Iraq and their covert relations goes back to many years before that. We believe, as we would explain below, that the alliance between the leadership of the MKO and Saddam Hussein and their cooperation in many crimes they committed during many years should have been included in the trial of Iraqi former dictator and dealt with by the relevant judges.

As you may know the leaders of the MKO moved to France when they started their armed struggle against the Islamic Republic of Iran on June 1981, and they started controlling and leading their activities inside Iran from that country. Once the French government imposed some limitations on their activities including leading terrorism in Iran from Paris, they moved their headquarters to Iraq. The grounds for this move had been prepared previously and the MKO armed forces were already present in Iraq and they were involved in military activities against Iran. The presence of Massoud Rajavi in Iraq did lead to a close relationship between the MKO and the Iraqi former government and in particular with the ministry of defence and the security services of Saddam Hussein's regime. Then the Iraqi officers started training the MKO personnel who were recruited from inside and outside Iran and then fully armed them. One year later, which is in June 1988, the formation of National Liberation Army (NLA) was officially announced in Iraq. This army stood alongside the Saddam Hussein's armed forces to fight against the Iranian army openly and actively. After the 598 Resolution of the UN Security Council was accepted by Iran on July 1988, this army made its last vast military assault against Iranian soil with the backing and cooperation of Iraqi armed forces which lead to thousands of losses on both sides.

When Saddam Hussein's army occupied Kuwait in August 1990 and consequently the US and its allies made a war against Iraq, there occurred the uprisings of the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south who were always under repression. In this incident the

NLA officially entered this conflict as part of Iraqi army and suppressed the Iraqi people's movement.

But this organisation beyond all atrocities that has committed against the civilians in Kurdistan and in the south inside Iraq in cooperation with the Saddam Hussein's regime, has even suppressed its own members with the aid of the former Iraqi security services and tortured them in Iraqi prisons.

Besides, the NLA which Massoud Rajavi was its commander in chief and Mehdi Abrishamchi and Abbas Davari have been its contacts with the notorious security services of Saddam Hussein has launched terrorist attacks against Iranian cities from Iraq and with the arms and facilities of Saddam Hussein with his direct orders.

Regarding the three points mentioned above, i.e. suppressing the people of Iraq, repressing the discontented members, and getting involved in terrorist activities inside Iranian cities, it is worth mentioning that some of the signatories of this letter have directly or indirectly been aware of this close cooperation of Saddam Hussein's military and security forces with the MKO and they are ready to be a witness in any court. They believe that in an Iraqi court today the case of Massoud Rajavi and other leading members of the MKO and the NLA, as the close aides of Saddam Hussein, must be dealt with like all criminals of the former Iraqi Ba'th party and they must be prosecuted and judged in an Iraqi court.

You surely agree that putting a person like Saddam Hussein on trial in Iraq had a great impact both socially and historically and the international and domestic public opinion were carefully following its process. Primarily in such trials it is more important to reveal the truth to the people than to require mere justice for both the defenders and the complainers. The fact that the regime of Saddam Hussein offered the last safe heaven to the MKO which is designated as a terrorist organisation by the international community and as a body which does not even have mercy for its own members cannot be ignored by the present Iraqi judiciary system. Every crime committed by the MKO leaders have been done with the direct cooperation of the Iraqi former dictator and also MKO was directly involved in atrocities done by Saddam Hussein. This fact should be revealed for the people of Iraq as well as the people of Iran. Therefore MKO and Massoud Rajavi must face trial the same way that Saddam Hussein did, since the two were close allies for many years.

Surely one crime committed by Saddam Hussein which has international aspects is that he helped a known terrorist organisation to carry out terrorist operation against its own people as well as the people of Iraq and even its own members. We believe that the MKO members are all prime victims of a terrorist cult who must be helped and freed and brought to normal life. Those who are in Ashraf Camp have gone through fierce brainwashing processes and therefore must be de-briefing.

Best regards

Copy to:

- UN Commission for Human Rights
- International Committee of the Red Cross
- Amnesty International
- Human Rights Watch
- Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- US Embassy in Iraq
- Press and Media

Britain still considers MKO terrorist

PressTV- 06 Feb 2008

British Foreign Office announced on Tuesday that the British government still considers the banned MKO a terrorist organization.

Mark Mallon Brown, British deputy foreign secretary for Asia and the United Nations, protested a recent verdict by the Commission for Reviewing the Status of Banned Organization.

He noted that until the final verdict is issued about the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), the organization will be considered to be a terrorist organization.

Lord Malloch Brown, a member of British House of Lords, pointed out that terrorism is something unacceptable; it does not matter who commits such offense.

The British Prime Minister Gordon Brown had said earlier that the MKO has not changed its behavior, which makes it inelligible to be removed from the list of terrorist organizations. The UK has banned the MKO in line with a decision made by the European Union and another by the US, which is widely known to be cooperating with the terrorist organization, despite officially having it on its list terrorist entities.

Four Mojahedin-e Khalq combatants arrested in Iraq

By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, The Associated Press -2008-02-09

BAGHDAD - Iraqi police arrested 31 Shiite activists Saturday in early morning raids south of Baghdad, and five American soldiers were killed in two roadside bombings, officials said.

The U.S. troops were killed Friday - four in Baghdad and one in the northern Tamim province, the military said. At least 3,958 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

Saturday marked a third day of U.S. and Iraqi operations in an area that includes several Shiite holy cities - raising tension with some Shiite tribesmen and fighters who have pledged to halt attacks. Radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr ordered a six-month cease-fire for his Mahdi Army militia, but some members have broken away and violated the pledge, which expires later this month.

U.S. and Iraqi forces say they are targeting rogue, criminal elements of his and other militias. But several Shiite imams, during Friday prayers, suggested Iraqi forces were taking advantage of the cease-fire to crack down on rival groups.

Al-Sadr has threatened not to extend his cease-fire unless the government purges rival Shiite militiamen he alleges have infiltrated the security forces and are targeting his followers.

Fifteen of Saturday's arrests took place in Karbala, a Shiite holy city 50 miles south of Baghdad, where Shiite Islam's two most revered saints are buried. Another 16 men were arrested in a Sadrist area of Nasiriyah, about 200 miles southeast of the capital, police said.

Rahman Mshawi, spokesman for Karbala police, said four of the Karbala suspects are members of the Iraq-based People's Mujahedeen Organization of Iran, or Mujahedeen Khalq.

The group was founded in the late 1960s and fled to Iraq in the early 1980s after it fell out with the clerical regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. During Saddam Hussein's rule, the movement used Iraq as a base for operations against Iran's government.

Thousands of its members remain in Iraq, and both the U.S. and Iraq consider the Khalq a terrorist organization. ...

Iraq FM: 200 former MKO members exit Iraq

Press TV, February 17, 2008-

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=43417§ionid=351020201>

Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari says Baghdad has managed to secure the departure of 200 former MKO members from Iraq.

These people who had previously distanced themselves from the cult demanded Iraqi officials to allow them to leave Iraq, Zebari said in a news conference.

He didn't elaborate on whether the former members have returned to Iran or have been relocated to a third country.

Zebari called the MKO a 'complicated problem' for Iraq and said the issue has gotten out of hand due to the support the organization receives from multinational forces.

The foreign minister said the government is still trying to regain control of Camp Ashraf from the MKO which is being supported by the US military.

According to reports 3,400 members of the Rajavi cult are still in camp situated in Diyala Province, 100 kilometers west of the Iranian border and 100 kilometers north of Baghdad near Khalis.

The terrorist group targeted Iranian government officials and civilians alike in Iran and abroad during the early 1980s, killing in excess of 3,000 people. The group also attempted an unsuccessful invasion Iran in the last days of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988.

Incidents linked to the group include the June 1981 bombing of the offices of the Islamic Republic Party which led to the killing of 72 high-ranking Iranian officials including Judiciary chief Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti and tens of Majlis deputies.

The following August the group also assassinated President Mohammad Ali Rajae'i, Prime Minister Javad Bahonar and National Police Chief Ali Dastgerdi at the Prime Ministry building.

Open Letter to Bryan Wilfert MP from Mohammad Mohammady in Canada

January 26, 2008 - <http://www.toeme1.blogfa.com/>

Mr. Bryan Wilfert, Richmond Hill Member of Parliament

225 Eat Beaver Creek

Richmond Hill, ON

Dear Mr. Wilfert,

In our meeting on Friday January 25, 2008, you asked me some questions regarding the situation of my sister, Somayeh Mohammady, as well as my parents who are also currently in Iraq, and the correspondent of the Canadian government. I have some doubts that I was able to answer your questions in a satisfactory manner since talking about this situation makes me too emotional and uncomfortable to properly formulate my thoughts and responses. I also wish to remind you that I am personally a victim of this brutal situation and suffered in the same condition that my sister experiences, for four ears.

Since 1998, knowing the nature and means of this organization, my parents started an internal campaign to free and return my sister back to Canada. As you might be aware, up to 2003 and before toppling of Saddam Hussein, it was impossible to talk about or disagree with the MKO publicly. If they have this much power to force a young girl to denounce her family and call her parents agents of the Iranian regime just because they tried to take her out of a war zone and from the camp of an organization that has been branded terrorist by many Western governments, you can clearly understand how dangerous and impossible it could have been back then when the leadership of the MKO had the full support of Saddam and anything could have happened to my sister with no consequences to those responsible. Even after my 2004 release, and up to recently, I had

serious concerns for my safety to talk about my own situation and just recently decided to come out and support my family regardless of the consequences to myself.

If, even now that this group is supposedly under the custody of American and International forces in Iraq, they can be such potential danger that the Canadian authorities call me to inform me about the threats to my parents lives in Iraq and ask me to force them to return to safety in Canada, you can imagine what it could have been like back in those years. For that reason in those years all my parents could do, that even than it was considered bold and risky by those aware of the MKO's violent means, was to try to find influential people inside the organization or write to the Rajavi's to beg for my sister's freedom and safe return. You might find translated copies of those letters in the possession of our lawyer Ms. Pamela Bhardwaj as part of our legal file. Even the fact that my father agreed to send me to Iraq in 1999 was a hopeless attempt to find a way to bring her back without going public against such a malicious organization.

The rest is documented and I hope you have some knowledge of it. I was captured too and could not get out until 2004 after the regime change in Iraq that also reduced the power of the MKO leaders. Though at the beginning, and by the advice of those close to us, I pretended to be happy and willing as a cover up to set the ground for my sister's release, as soon as they learned about my real intention, I was kept in solitary confinement and tortured in many brutal and inhumane ways. However, since I was a Canadian citizen at that time, my father was able to take me out in 2004 but, although my sister expressed her desire back then to go with us, since she did not have Canadian status after 7 years of absence from Canada, she was asked by the authorities at the time to remain there till they resolve this issue which they never did up to this point.

What is being used against my father by the MKO, and unfortunately being echoed by some Canadian authorities, is the fact that since that time my father made numerous trips to Iraq, ignoring the dangers on the ground. This should tell you how important the situation is to my family. We tried everything from desperately begging the Rajavi's and the other leaders of the organization, setting up informative campaigns, following a lengthy legal process and physically going there and putting our lives in danger. What else do we need to try in order to make the Canadian government understand that we are extremely suffering and need to reunite with our sister and daughter? It is not only because we are worried for her and miss her, not because none of us can enjoy our lives knowing that one of us is trapped in such a horrible situation, not because we feel disempowered and humiliated for the constant rejection of our plea, not because knowing the conviction of my father that he will not stop until he brings her back and fulfills his duties as a father even if we lose everything, but simply because we are Canadians and the day we took the oath we were promised the same rights and protection as the rest of the citizens of this great country. Many people come to Canada every year from backward, violent and undemocratic corners of the world trying to make a new start and learn and follow those rules that make this country so great and outstanding. We are learning too but at the same time we need to feel belonging and that we are equally a part of it.

At the end, in my humble opinion, it does not reflect positively on our government to use or repeat the same allegations, against my family, as those used by the MKO mouthpieces. Every day in the past 5 years people left the camp, committed suicide or denounced this organization. The same label was used for all of them that they have been bought by a third party and have a shady agenda. We are opposing this mentality and ask you to use an open and fresh mind to help us.

With many regards,
Mohammad Mohammady

Symposium on Terrorism in Iraq

Centre for International and Inter-governmental Studies of the University of Baghdad
Thursday, 31st of January 2008.

A round table discussion centred on the issue of terrorism in Iraq and possible solutions to this problem.

The Symposium was divided into 3 parts:

- the general threat posed by terrorist groups and the ways they operate in Iraq
- foreign terrorist organisations in Iraq
- the creation of terrorist organisations in Iraq and the global supporters of these terrorist groups

Participants of the Symposium ranged from university professors including, Dr. Aziz Jabar Shayal, Dr. Samir Alshweely and Dr. Rasheed Saleh, professors of Political Studies from the University of Baghdad. The Symposium was also attended by many governmental and non-governmental representatives from a wide range of ministries and NGOs, including representatives from Iraq's Ministries of Defence, Human Rights and Security.

Massoud Khodabandeh from the Centre de recherches sur le terrorisme depuis le 11 septembre 2001 (Paris), who was in Baghdad for meetings concerning the fate of the remaining individuals following dismantlement of Camp Ashraf which houses the disarmed Iranian terrorist organisation Mojahedin Khalq Organisation, was invited to participate in the discussion.

Prominent among the participants was Mr. Bassam Alhassani, advisor to Prime Minister Noori Al Maleki.

The Symposium ended with a full report on the issues discussed and Dr. Aziz Jabar Shayal delivered the end resolution in which one paragraph emphasized the necessity for the dismantlement and deportation of the foreign terrorist Mojahedin Khalq organisation and encouragement and facilitation by the government and others to help the remaining individuals find a safe place outside Iraq and return to normal life.

The symposium was covered by media representatives who reported from the meeting room.

Alaraghia television, Iraq's main TV network, reported the Symposium and broadcast a brief interview with Massoud Khodabandeh.

In the interview, Massoud Khodabandeh emphasised above all the right of the Iraqi people to enjoy security and have justice served against the perpetrators of violent acts in their country, in particular the criminal heads of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq organisation which was involved in the massacre of the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings against Saddam Hussein in March 1991. Mr Khodabandeh said that in his belief and according to all the studies of the Centre de Recherches sur le Terrorisme, the phenomenon of terrorism cannot have a single solution and needs inter governmental cooperation as well as the involvement of NGOs to protect the human rights of the who have been inveigled by terrorist leaders into this path, and to give them a second chance of integration back into their societies.

Thanking the organisers of the Symposium Mr Khodabandeh emphasised the cult culture of terrorist organisations and the methods they use to brainwash their followers. He also gave examples of foreign support by some influential groups and parties who facilitate the flow of finance for terrorism. Not the least the relationship between the remainders of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, London, Washington and other countries with the Mojahedin Khalq Organisation, and the way this relationship is becoming clear in the escalation of violence in Diyali province as well as the streets of London and other European countries.

The Symposium lasted for over two hours. Afterwards the participants formed smaller groups to further discuss the variety of issues raised by the Seminar.

Iran sees less threat in exiled MKO militants

Scott Peterson Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor - 11 February 2008

- Gholam Reza Sadeghi felt certain of his fate if he ever returned to Iran: torture and execution, given his years as a member of the antiregime Mujahideen-e Khalq, or "People's Holy Warriors."

But stuck in a crowded camp in Iraq with 3,400 other members of the MKO under US military guard, Mr. Sadeghi finally had had enough. He wanted out, and to see his son.

So he came back to the Islamic Republic, which imprisoned him for five years in the 1980s for participating in a group labeled "terrorist" by both Washington and Tehran. Yet some American officials view the MKO - disarmed but still intact - as a possible tool of regime change against Iran. And the MKO's continued presence in Iraq aggravates US-Iran tensions.

What Sadeghi found was a soft-touch amnesty that he had never been told of in the MKO camp. His case could resonate with the 100 or so other Iranian militants who have been allowed to leave the camp in recent weeks, afraid to return to Iran and running into trouble in Kurdish northern Iraq and upon entering Turkey.

"Because I had been in prison, I expected to go back to prison, torture, and execution," says Sadeghi, who was detained for a week and then let go. "They said [the MKO] is not a threat. [They said,] 'We know you were a victim yourself, who thought you were doing something good for your country but were deceived by a cult.' "

The MKO (or MEK) in 2002 tipped off the world to Iran's secret uranium-enrichment program - with the help of Israel, many analysts have concluded. It now says the recent findings of a US National Intelligence Estimate were wrong and that Iran restarted a nuclear- weapons program in 2004. UN inspectors, however, say that much of the information the UN has received from the group in recent years has a political purpose and has been wrong.

No nation has taken the militants who left Camp Ashraf, north of Baghdad, some of them carrying US military letters for travel to Turkey. Documents of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees show that at one point in their saga nearly two weeks ago, 19 were turned back to Iraq by Turkey, dozens were picked up in Kurdish northern Iraq and some forced to return to the dangers of central Iraq, and 26 were missing.

The situation highlights the sensitivity of Camp Ashraf, which has been virtually off-limits to journalists since the fall of Saddam Hussein. According to some of the 340 former MKO members who have returned to Iran with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the MKO controls all aspects of life in the camp. Numbers have dropped: Only 12 returned to Iran in all of 2007, and three more in mid-January.

"We don't have the impression that these people are harassed or bothered, ... mainly because the families and the [Iranian] authorities want them to come back," says Andreas

Schweizer, until recently the ICRC protection officer in Tehran. "We haven't heard of any problems so far."

Indeed, in 2005, when the Monitor followed up privately on the story of one returnee, his mother complained about the lack official reintegration help. There had been no government interference either, she said.

The MKO's checkered and violent history has kept it on the US and European terrorist list. The MKO killed several American military advisers and civilians in Iran in the 1970s, played a key role in Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, and supported the US Embassy seizure before breaking away and launching attacks that have killed scores of senior Iranian officials.

Exiled first to France and then expelled in 1986, the MKO was given safe haven, weapons, and cash from Saddam Hussein. Though he used it to fight Iran during the Iran-Iraq war - an act that soured most Iranians toward the group - and to help quell local uprisings in 1991, the MKO today portrays itself as a democratic Iranian government-in-waiting.

MKO coleader Maryam Rajavi, as quoted recently in the Opinion pages of the Monitor, claims substantial underground support in Iran, and said US labeling of Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist group is a "clear testament and an indispensable prelude to democratic change in Iran."

But analysts dispute claims of broad support. "They are so discredited in Iran that I can't imagine they have any social basis," says Ervand Abrahamian, an Iran historian at the City University of New York and author of "The Iranian Mojahedin," a study of the MKO.

"I think you would find the current President [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad more democratic than the Mujahideen," says Mr. Abrahamian. "Even in the early 1970s, it had turned into a cult organization.... The remaining members ... will do whatever [MKO leader Massoud] Rajavi tells them."

The State Department's terrorism report last year said the MKO maintains "the capacity and will to commit terrorist acts in Europe, the Middle East, the United States, Canada and beyond."

The report notes the MKO's "cult-like characteristics," such that "new members are indoctrinated in MEK ideology and revisionist Iranian history [and] required to ... participate in weekly 'ideological cleansings.'" Children are separated from their parents, it adds, and Mrs. Rajavi "has established a 'cult of personality.'"

The US rejected a secret 2003 Iranian offer to exchange top MKO leaders for several Al Qaeda personalities now held in Iran.

"The Islamic Republic's policy toward the MKO is very clear - there is nothing hidden," says a foreign ministry official who asked not to be named. "In our opinion they are a terrorist cult. When it comes to cults, only the leaders are responsible, and the rest are all victims themselves."

The MKO and some in Congress and the Pentagon have challenged the terrorist label. Senior Iranian officers have accused US forces in Iraq of using the MKO during interrogations of Iranians detained in Iraq. Western news reports also suggest that some

MKO operatives may be conducting cross-border operations into Iran on behalf the US.

Indeed, such action seemed to be on offer to Sadeghi when US federal agents first questioned him in Camp Ashraf in 2003. After release from prison in Iran in the 1980s, he had fled to Canada in the 1980s, where the MKO found him and gave him a letter from leader Rajavi. "The letter said: 'You were one of us, and suffered in prison,'" recounts Sadeghi. "Now you are in Toronto living the good life. You forgot your brothers and sisters, you forgot freedom and democracy."

Sadeghi left his Canadian wife, broke custody rules by letting the MKO ship his son to his parents in Iran, and was moved by the MKO to Los Angeles. His visit to Iraq was meant to be short-term, but the MKO took his US passport and said they destroyed it, he says.

After US forces disarmed the group in 2003, the FBI met with each member. Sadeghi says he was told that the US planned to topple Iran's regime, that they wanted his help, and that they would ensure his return to the US. Sticking with the MKO would mean "never seeing the US again."

"I didn't believe [the FBI agent] was going to send me back to the US, or I would have jumped on it," says Sadeghi. Tired of daily MKO self-criticism sessions, he finally told the Americans he wanted to go to Iran. He had not seen his parents for 22 years; his son was 16 and full of resentment. "He asked me: 'Where were you? For 10 years, no call, no postcard,'" says Sadeghi, adding that his life was broken by the MKO. "For that, he hates me."

* Familiar Faces: Staff writer Scott Peterson has written several stories about Iran's largest opposition group in exile, the Mujahideen-e Khalq (the MKO or MEK). But this time when he checked up on those who had been trickling back to Iran from Iraq, he found a surprise at the offices of the Nejat or Rescue group that helps former MKO members reintegrate into civilian life in Iran.

Nejat is run by former MKO militants. Among them, Scott recognized Arash Sametipour, an English-speaker who had conducted a failed assassination attempt and then blown off his right hand while trying to kill himself to avoid capture.

"The last time I saw him, he was wearing a prison uniform in a Tehran jail," says Scott, who had interviewed Mr. Sametipour along with several other MKO prisoners. "Today he is the main liaison between Nejat and the Red Cross. He is now trying to find a home for those 100 or so MKO members who recently left Camp Ashraf in Iraq."

- David Clark Scott,
World editor