

# ParsBrief

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### **Talabani: Iraq wants Iranian opposition camp out**

www.chinaview.cn - 2009-03-03

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/03/content\\_10930887.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/03/content_10930887.htm)

BAGHDAD, Xinhua - Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said on Monday that Iraq wanted to expel the Iranian rebel Mujahideen Khalq Organization (MKO) that opposes the Islamic regime.

Talabani made the remarks in a joint news conference with Iran's former president and current Expediency Council head Ali Akbar Hashemi who arrived here earlier in the day for a visit.

Speaking to the reporters, Talabani accused the MKO, also known as the PMOI (People's Mujahedeen Organization of Iran) of supporting former Saddam Hussein regime and committing crimes against Iraqis.

"We here in Iraq, our constitution prohibit the presence of any foreign armed group in Iraq and the Iraqi people know that this organization is terrorist one," said the Iraqi president, adding "the Iraqi people want them out from Iraq."

MKO, a main militant group which was founded in 1981 with an aim to establish "a democratic and secular government" in Iran, bases in Iraq's Diyala province in a camp named Camp Ashraf, which contains more than 3,000 Iranians opponents and their families.

The Shiite-dominated Iraqi government repeatedly demands MKO members to be removed from the country.

After the U.S.-led invasion, the U.S. troops disarmed the MKO fighters and since then, the camp became under the U.S. military police protection for five years before the Iraqi government partially took over security responsibility in the camp.

This is Rafsanjani's first visit to Iraq since Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979.

Talabani met with the former Iranian president in his residence at the edge of the heavily fortified Green Zone in central Baghdad that houses the Iraqi government offices and some foreign embassies, including the U.S. one.

At the news conference, Rafsanjani said that his country "is entirely ready to support and cooperate with the Iraqi brotherly people."

Iraq and Iran fought a bloody eight-year war in 1980s, resulting in the loss of one million lives. The relation, however, has been picking up since the Saddam Hussein regime was toppled in 2003 and the Shiite came into power.

Editor: Mu Xuequan

### **MKO imminent expulsion from Iraq**

FNA, 2009-03-07

Iran has been the first and main supporter of the Iraqi government after the downfall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Labid Abawi said on Saturday.

"We have excellent relations with Iran and Iran has always supported us ever since the downfall of Saddam and the two sides have signed dozens of Memoranda of Understanding," Abawi told FNA.

He further noted the increase in the visits to Iran by Iraqi officials, and reiterated, "Our trip with Mr. Jalal Talabani to Tehran was aimed at deepening of relations with our neighbor Iran and took place at the invitation of Iranian President Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad."

On the issue of the security pact between Iraq and the US and the US president's statements on the withdrawal of the countries' troops from Iraq, Abawi said, "We are in full harmony with Iran and our position is completely transparent (on this issue). During this trip, we didn't speak about the (Iraq-US) agreement."

Asked about the Iranian diplomats who have been arrested by the US forces in Iraq, he said Iraq has pressured Americans to release the Iranian diplomats as soon as possible, adding that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has informed Iraqi officials that two of the Iranian inmates will be freed in the near future.

Elsewhere, he pointed out that the anti-Iran terrorist group, the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), will be expelled from Iraq and that his country is searching for a third country to host the group members.

Labawi expressed pleasure in his visit to Iran, and described his meetings with Iranian officials as fruitful, stressing that Iraq wants to further strengthen ties with Iran.

## **MKO still being monitored by Germany's intelligence agency**

IRNA – 2009-03-05

<http://www5.irna.ir/En/View/FullStory/?NewsId=384069&idLanguage=3>

Iran: Boroujerdi warns EU of downplaying MKO and Pejak terror threats

The Chairman of the Foreign Policy and National Security Commission of Majlis Alaeddin Boroujerdi warned the European Union of downplaying the terror threat of group like MKO and Pejak.

Meeting with Klaus-Dieter Fritsche, the top intelligence coordinator of the German chancellery in Berlin on Thursday, Boroujerdi said Germany and the EU had to have a realistic approach towards terrorist groups like MKO and Pejak.

Although the EU has removed the name of MKO from its terror list, the notorious MKO terror group is still being monitored by Germany's domestic Verfassungsschutz intelligence agency, a high-level German government official, requesting anonymity told IRNA recently in Berlin.

"Just because the EU has lifted the ban, it does not mean that we don't have our own national security considerations," the official said.

"For instance, parts of the German Left party are being subjected to surveillance by the Verfassungsschutz although they are not blacklisted by the EU," he added.

The official made clear that Germany's federal secret service and its state branches will continue the MKO observation.

Each German state has also its own Verfassungsschutz intelligence apparatus.

The MKO has been involved in the mass murders of thousands of innocent Iranians over the past 30 years.

Furthermore, the Israeli-backed MKO terror group has also collaborated with the former Saddam regime, in brutally massacring tens of thousands of Iraq Kurds and Shias.

## **Mojahedin Khalq had taken over a building belonging to the Iraqi army**

Ashargh Alawsat, March 17, 2009

<http://www.asharg-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=16091>

.. An Iranian opposition group said Monday that Iraqi troops tightened their siege of a camp north of Baghdad where about 3,500 of their members have been based for about 20 years.

The People's Mujahedeen said Iraqi troops have prevented food and fuel from reaching Camp Ashraf for the past six days — despite written guarantees by the Iraqi government that it would guarantee human rights of the residents.

But Iraqi national security adviser Mouwaffak al-Rubaie branded the allegations "totally baseless." He said People's Mujahedeen members had taken over a building belonging to the Iraqi army and were preventing soldiers from entering it.

"They have a huge propaganda machine all over the world and are known to exaggerate things," added al-Rubaie, whom the People's Mujahedeen said was behind the alleged crackdown.

Iran and the United States consider the People's Mujahedeen a terrorist group and Tehran has stepped up pressure on the Iraqis to close the camp. Iraq took over security for the camp from the U.S. on Jan. 1.

But the Iraqi government promised the U.S. that it would not force the group's members to leave against their will.

The People's Mujahedeen opposed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi during the 1979 revolution but fell out with the clerical regime that replaced him. Saddam Hussein allowed the group to set up a camp during the Iran-Iraq war for staging raids across the border inside Iran.

U.S. troops disarmed the fighters and confined them to Camp Ashraf after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam.

Also Monday, residents of the Kurdish town of Halabja marked the 21st anniversary of the March 16-17 poison gas attack by Saddam's forces against Kurdish separatists.

The 1988 attack killed thousands of people and was the biggest use of chemical weapons against a civilian populated area in history.

Local officials and victims' relatives placed wreaths on a monument to the dead.

"The anniversary has become etched in the memory of many people," said Aras Abbadi, who lost 21 relatives in the attack. "Every year, we wait for the anniversary and condemn that deplorable attack committed by a dictatorial regime against its own people."

Another participant, Mariam Saleh, 59, pointed to a photograph on display that shows a truck full of victims.

## **Iran summons Czech charge d'affairs Service: Foreign Policy**

ISNA - 2009-03-16

The Charge d'affairs of Czech Republic embassy in Tehran was summoned to Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday.

The Deputy of Iran's Foreign Ministry Director General for human rights and women criticized the EU double standards on terrorism.

The Iranian official also called on the Czech official who is the current holder of the EU's rotating presidency, to follow an unchanging and logical approach regarding terrorism and take stance based on correct information instead of issuing unfounded statements.

The Iranian official then asked the EU not to use human rights as an instrument.

The Czech official pledged to inform the EU of Iran's criticism and comments.

The EU has already removed the name of Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) from its terrorist black list. The move provoked strong condemnation in Iran.

The group carried out a large number of terrorist attacks in Iran and then fled to Iraq after Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The group helped the former Iraqi President Saddam Hossein in his attacks against Iranian territory.

### **Office of Iraq's National security: camp Ashraf leaders prevent the entry of survey team**

Aswatal Iraq – 13-03-2009

<http://ar.aswataliraq.info/?p=133921>

Baghdad - The Iraq's national security advisor, on Friday, said that the leadership of camp Ashraf prevented the entry of survey team of the Ministry of Human Rights who were supposed to perform their duty to identify options for the inhabitants either to return to Iran, or to select a third country.

The national security advisor said in a statement [A copy of which received by Aswatal Iraq]: "The committee in charge of putting an end to Camp Ashraf case, held their regular meeting, chaired by the representative of the national security advisor, and in the presence of all members of the committee discussed topics on the agenda included the Ashraf camp case."

The statement quoted the representative of the national security advisor, saying that "leadership of the camp is still authoritarian and confiscated the freedom of the residents

of the camp , preventing the entry of the Ministry of Human Rights' survey team into the camp, to identify options for the inhabitants, to choose between the return to Iran or the selection of a third country, "stressing that " the government would not backtrack on its decision to close the camp. "

The statement reads: "MKO leaders, under the same practices, continued to prevent making the necessary arrangements to facilitate the visit of families with their children who are inhabitants of Camp Ashraf. This is a clear violation of human rights, despite attempts by the Iraqi government to facilitate such visits in the framework of obligations in accordance and with respect to human rights and international conventions ".

The statement noted that "such acts are illegal and hinders the Iraqi government from providing Ashraf Refugee Camp inhabitants with humanitarian assistance and facilities and discourages the Iraqi government from humanitarian dealing with the camp . Such actions are a clear proof of the Camp Ashraf Leadership adherence to terrorism and hostilities against Iraq and its people."

The statement called on international organizations "to condemn such actions which are a clear violation of human rights."

The People's Mojahedin Organization [MKO/PMOI/MEK] based in Camp Ashraf in Diyala province northeast of Baghdad with the support of Saddam Hussein.

After the U.S. invasion to Iraq in 2003, they were disarmed. The Organization has been under American protection in spite of being classified a terrorist organization.

After signing the security agreement between Iraq and the United States government, Iraqi government took the responsibility of the Ashraf refugee camp provided that the American forces to remain in the camp. ..

### **US-Protected Iran Exile Group in Line for Huge Cash Windfall**

By Jeff Stein | January 28, 2009

The MEK can use some of that cash to pay legal settlements with former members that they tortured, as well as the families of Iranians they killed when they fought on the side of Saddam against Iran.

The controversial Iranian exile organization MEK, which the United States calls a terrorist group, could soon see a windfall of tens of millions of dollars as the result of the European Union's decision Monday to take it off its list of terrorist organizations.

If so, it will mark dramatic turnaround the group's fortunes.

The MEK, shorthand for the Mujahedin-e Khalq, and also known as the People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran, looked like it was on the ropes only days ago, when Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said he wanted its U.S.-protected military base near the Iranian border closed within two months.

But the E.U.'s Jan. 26 decision not only unlocks untold millions of dollars frozen in European banks, it allows the militant anti-Iran organization to go public with appeals for millions more, perhaps catapulting it into a leading role in the Iranian opposition abroad.

The MEK could claim \$9 million held in France alone, along with "tens of millions of dollars" worth of assets locked away in other EU countries, its spokesman told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

What will it do with the windfall?

"Set off car bombs around Iran," jibed former CIA operative Robert Baer, whose pursuit was dramatized by George Clooney in the 2005 movie "Syriana."

The group says it has renounced violence, but the MEK has carried out dozens of terrorist attacks and assassinations against Iranian targets both inside and outside of the country. Some of those were launched from its base in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, before the 2003 U.S. invasion.

MEK leader Maryam Rajavi said the unfrozen millions "will be used to increase our political activities ... including to further disclose the mullah regime's secret nuclear weapons sites." Since Hussein's overthrow, the 3,000 MEK fighters in Camp Ashraf, as it's called, have been under the "protection" of U.S. troops, even though they're still officially labeled terrorists by the State Department.

The seeming anomaly can be at least partly explained by frequent reports that the MEK has been secretly helping the CIA run operations against the Islamic regime from its base in southeastern Iraq.

Its terrorist label was earned before the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, when the group, which bills itself as Marxist-Islamist, targeted Americans working in Iran. Indeed, 30 years ago this month the group helped overthrow the U.S.-backed shah and take 52 American hostages.

But eventually it turned against the religious regime. In 2001 its sustained opposition to Iran, its supposed renunciation of violence, and its portrayal of itself as a "progressive" political force won it admirers in the Bush administration and pro-democracy groups in Europe. Of no small note, it has also played a major role in exposing Iran's nuclear activities.



Walid Phares, a scholar on terrorism and American of Lebanese descent, called the closing of Camp Ashraf "a significant Iranian victory."

"Ashraf was the only base for the MEK against Iran's regime," he said by e-mail. "If it is shut down, they will lose the only base they have."

"More than a military base of the opposition against Tehran," he added, "Ashraf was a political base for broadcast and political outreach to the opposition in the inside."

On the other hand, the E.U.'s decision will conceivably allow MEK fighters entry into Europe, at least temporarily solving the problem of what to do with them once Ashraf is closed.

That, and the new money, can only add to the MEK's political clout, which was put on display last year when the group drew 85,000 people to an anti-Iran protest outside Paris.

To date, exile communities have been divided over the MEK because of its attacks on Iranian troops from Iraqi soil during the two nations' 10-year war. Some call the organization a puritanistic "cult," because of its iron-fist leadership by a husband and wife team who have been accused of violating the human rights of their own followers.

But the E.U.'s decision could give the MEK a big boost over its rivals, Phares suggests.

"Once they are decertified [as a terrorist group] they will act as an international NGO [non-governmental organization] and will most likely receive even more donations from Iranian exiles," said Phares, a senior fellow at the hawkish Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington.

"De-certification by itself will strengthen the group within the Iranian diaspora," he continued. "Will they access to frozen funds in EU banks? This is another issue and will have to be negotiated. But certainly they will have a legal base. They will spend it to widen their base, and on strategic communications regarding Iran."

All things considered, it's not hard to suspect a hidden American hand in the E.U. decision, or at least acquiescence in it, since it so neatly finesses the eviction notice served on Camp Ashraf by Prime Minister Maliki.

In any event, it keeps MEK alive -- and more -- despite the threatened closing of its longtime base in Iraq.

The Iranian regime reacted sharply to the E.U. move, accusing the union of a "double standard" on terrorism. It also said it was drafting a plan to put MEK members on trial, "either in the Islamic Republic or outside the country," according to Press TV, an Iranian news service.