

ParsBrief

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Iraqi police entered Mujahedin-e-Khalq terrorist base

Nejat Society – June 01, 2009

Iraqi police entered Mujahedin-e-Kahlq terrorist base Camp Ashraf on Thursday 28th,2009.

Camp Ashraf has acted as the MKO's headquarters and training base in Iraq's Diyala Province for the past two decades. Baghdad had earlier vowed to shut down the camp and end the group's presence in the country.

After the U.S.-led invasion, the U.S. troops disarmed the organization fighters and since then, the camp became under the U.S. military police protection for five years.

After the finalization of a security agreement between Baghdad and Washington, Iraq took control over the Camp Ashraf on January 1, 2009.

The Iraqi government has vowed to expel the members of the terrorist group from the country, maintaining that their presence 'in Iraq is not an option'.

Iraqi PM, Noori Al Maliki in London Concerning the Mojahedin Khalq presence in Iraq said: "Under no circumstances would their presence in Iraq be acceptable. Irrespective of some speculation that this may be due to pressure from Iranians or non Iranians, I should emphasize clearly that even if Iran asks us to keep them in Iraq, we will not allow this. This is a terrorist organisation present in various lists of terrorist entities across the globe which of course concerns many, including Iran, the United Nations and other countries."

MKO took part with Saddam Hussein Presidential Guard and other Iraqi security forces in crushing the Iraqi people's uprising. The MKO harmed the Iraqi people when the Iraqi

army refused to carry out the killings that Saddam Hussein required. Families of the victims in Iraq cannot forget this.

The PMOI is considered a terrorist organization by several nations, including the United States.

Red Cross repatriates 260 Iran rebels from Iraq

AFP , June 02,2009

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The International Committee of the Red Cross has helped with the voluntary repatriation of 260 members of Iran's main armed opposition, the People's Mujahedeen, over five years, the ICRC said on Monday.

ICRC spokeswoman Dibeh Fakhr told reporters the 260 had been repatriated between the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and April 2008, after having asked to return to Iran. Two more Mujahedeen members have since also returned home.

"The committee has helped 260 members of the Mujahedeen Khalq (People's Mujahedeen) to return to Iran, and we actually managed to take them back to their country," she said.

The Mujahedeen, which seeks to overthrow Iran's Islamic regime, is branded a terrorist organisation by the United States, while the European Union only removed it from its blacklist earlier this year.

It was founded in 1965 in opposition to the shah, but was sidelined by the rival clerical regime which took power in the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The group's largest base in exile is in Ashraf, north of Baghdad. It was set up in the 1980s when Saddam Hussein was in power and at war with Iran as a base to operate against the Iranian government.

It is home to 3,500 Mujahedeen supporters and their families.

"Our role is purely humanitarian, and we have visited them to check their situation in the (Ashraf) camp," the ICRC spokeswoman said. "During the visit, some of them expressed their desire to return to Iran."

Since April 2008, the ICRC helped two more members of the Mujahedeen return to Iran around a week ago, said Patrick Yusef, who heads the ICRC in Iraq's central provinces.

In March, Iraq's National Security Advisor Muwafaq al-Rubaie said the Mujahedeen members who were based in the Ashraf camp should leave, describing them as "foreign terrorists".

But the Mujahedeen said a forcible transfer would be illegal and that its supporters in the camp would never leave.

'MKO behind' Iran embassy attack in Sweden

PressTV - Jun 28, 2009

Iranian authorities say anti-Iran terrorist group MKO has been involved in the recent attack on the Iranian embassy near Stockholm in Sweden.

The Iranian Embassy in Sweden came under attack on Friday when more than 150 people gathered outside its main building to protest the outcome of the June 12 presidential election.

One of the embassy personnel was seriously injured in the attack, police said.

Rasoul Emami, Iranian Ambassador to Sweden, said members of the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) were found to be among the assailants.

According to Emami, the terrorists have been caught on camera smashing the windows, breaking through the building, attacking embassy staff and tearing down the fence.

The remarks come only a week after Iranian security officials discovered that the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) had helped intensify the post-election violence in Iran.

According to the security officials, the arrested members had confessed that they were extensively trained at their bases in Iraq's camp Ashraf to create post-election mayhem in the country.

Founded in the 1960s, MKO is a guerilla group, which masterminded a slew of terrorist operations in Iran.

The terrorists are especially notorious for taking sides with former dictator Saddam Hussein during the war Iraq imposed on Iran (1980-1988).

The group masterminded a slew of terrorist operations in Iran and Iraq -- one of which was the 1981 bombing of the offices of the Islamic Republic Party, in which more than 72 Iranian officials were killed.

A 2007 German intelligence report from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has identified the MKO as a "repressive, sect-like and Stalinist authoritarian organization which centers around the personality cult of [MKO leaders] Maryam and Masoud Rajavi".

Maliki: US combat help not needed after June 30

Middle East Online, June 16, 2009

The last US army personnel protecting Rajavi in Camp Ashraf to leave

This pull-out includes the 25 US soldiers based at Camp Ashraf for the protection of Massoud Rajavi. The MKO is staging a carnival-rally in Paris on June 20 as a last ditch attempt to force American support for the cult. It is unlikely that PM al-Maliki will change his position based on such a rally (Iran Interlink).

Iraq PM says government would only request American logistical assistance after US pullout.

BAGHDAD - Iraq will not call on US forces to take part in combat operations after they pull out from urban centres in two weeks, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said in remarks published on Tuesday.

Maliki told French daily Le Monde that his government would only request American logistical assistance, a day after the top US commander in Iraq said the American pullout was on schedule.

"We will not ask them to intervene in combat operations or in operations related to maintaining public order," the Iraqi premier said. "It is finished."

Maliki said Baghdad would only call on US forces "for transporting our troops when we need them because we don't have any planes. That is why we are purchasing helicopters from France and the United States."

He did not expect "an explosion in violence after June 30," the date by which US troops must leave Iraq's cities, towns and villages as part of a landmark security accord between Washington and Baghdad that will see American forces leave Iraq by the end of 2011.

"Regardless, reports from the Americans themselves say our forces are ready to take over," Maliki added. "There will be no turning back, there is no question of reviewing the agreement on the American withdrawal."

On Monday, US General Ray Odierno, the top US commander in Iraq, told reporters that the majority of his troops had already left Iraqi cities ahead of the June 30 pullout, and added that the withdrawal was on schedule.

Jundullah admits MKO connection

PressTV - Jun 03, 2009

The head of the Jundullah gang, Abdulmalik Rigi, has admitted receiving assistance from the terrorist group Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO).

The al-Qaeda-affiliated Jundullah is a sectarian Sunni organization that occasionally launches terrorist attacks against Shias in the southeastern Iranian province of Baluchestan from across the border in Pakistan.

Their latest outrage was a suicide bombing in a Shia mosque in Zahedan, the provincial capital. Last Thursday's bombing killed 25 worshippers and injured more than a hundred.

There have been persistent intelligence reports of collaborations between the MKO and Jundullah in the past. But, in a significant admission, Rigi told a US-based satellite TV station, monitored by the ISNA news agency on June 2, "They (MKO) have had good intelligence collaborations with us and have provided us with much information about the activities of the Iranian regime."

Rigi, who was described as a man who "used to fight with the Taliban and is part drug smuggler, part Taliban, part Sunni activist," by Alexis Debat, a senior fellow on counterterrorism at the Nixon Center and an ABC News consultant who recently met with Pakistani officials and tribal members, told the station, "They (MKO) inform us about the regime's activities in our areas of operations and let us know of the regime's forces in these districts and send us most of the intelligence of our interest by email and messages."

Rigi, who like his fellow al-Qaeda fanatics, has a penchant for videotaped decapitation of hostages, boasted in the interview, "We have treaties of friendship with all groups who act against Iran, and, among these, the MKO can do some things for us and we too can transit their members. But, I guess that they have certain limitations and are in countries where they cannot carry out their intended actions the way they want."

This was an apparent reference to the presence of MKO co-leader Maryam Rajavi in France, where the group has recently been taken off the terrorist list on the pretext of having forsworn violence.

Rigi's revelations undermine the MKO's claimed transformation.

The MKO, which killed thousands of people in their campaign of terrorism in Iran, mainly in the 1980s, later were sheltered and armed by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. They are led by the husband-and-wife team of Massoud and Maryam Rajavi. While the whereabouts of Massoud are not clear following the US invasion of Iraq, Maryam is based in France and openly solicits for support and funds from certain European politicians.

The MKO is listed as a terrorist organization by Iran, Iraq, Canada, and the US, but was recently removed from the list in the European Union.

Iraqi official denies Mojahedin-e Khalq camp under siege

Source: Al-Arabiya TV, Dubai, in Arabic

Reported by: BBC Monitoring, June 9, 2009

Al-Arabiya Television at 1327 gmt on 9 June reports the following: "The Iranian opposition group, Mojahedin-e Khalq, whose headquarters in Iraq are confined to Camp Ashraf in Diyala Governorate, has reported that the Iraqi Police's Rapid Response Forces tightened their embargo on the camp's occupants and banned the entry of goods and people to it. The Iraqi Committee for the Defence of Camp Ashraf had issued a statement denouncing the tightening of the noose around the group by the Rapid Response Forces as well as threats to the camp's occupants of murder and arrest, warning of a possible humanitarian disaster."

Eight minutes later, the channel interviews Staff Major General Abd-al-Karim Khalaf, chief of operations at the Iraqi Interior Ministry, via telephone from Baghdad.

Asked if the government is planning to close down Camp Ashraf, Staff Major General Khalaf says: "As an Interior Ministry, we are responsible for certain matters relating to the camp, such as providing protection for the camp and securing its outer perimeter; guaranteeing the entry of humanitarian goods as stipulated by international agreements - a matter that we handle in transparent fashion; and ensuring that the camp's residents do not interact with security forces, and all three of these objectives are being met."

He adds: "Some of the security units were replaced - the brothers dispatched by the Interior Ministry left certain positions - and the Interior Ministry is bound by the constitution

to provide protection - and is capable of doing so - but its work is hampered by these people [the Mojahedin-e Khalq], who are escalating the situation with certain positions and statements and are providing wrong and highly exaggerated accounts. Interior Ministry personnel have not interacted with them at all, and no siege has been laid around the camp. The camp has certain outlets through which some humanitarian goods and basic necessities are allowed to pass, and they remain operational."

Commenting on the accusations made by the Committee for the Defence of Camp Ashraf, the major general maintains that "there has been no interaction with the camp's residents, and the protection forces are stationed around the camp's perimeter, so how can there be a tightening of the noose? How can the noose be tightened when the camp has specific outlets and when more than one party - not just the Interior Ministry - are overseeing the camp? One of these outlets is located near a Multinational Forces position and these forces can see what is happening."

Asked if "you have any political or military orders to close the camp in the near future," Staff Major General Khalaf says: "No, not at all." He reiterates the role of the Interior Ministry in securing the camp and regulating the flow of goods into it.

Iran finds US-backed MKO fingerprints in riots

PressTV - Sun, Jun 21, 2009

MKO Leader Maryam Rajavi has called the MKO as the real winner of Iran's election.

The terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) has reportedly played a major role in intensifying the recent wave of street violence in Iran.

Iranian security officials reported Saturday that they have identified and arrested a large number of MKO members who were involved in recent riots in Iran's capital.

According to the security officials, the arrested members had confessed that they were extensively trained in Iraq's camp Ashraf to create post-election mayhem in the country.

They had also revealed that they have been given directions by the MKO command post in Britain.

Street protests broke out after defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi rejected President Ahmadinejad's decisive win in the June 12 election. His supporters have staged a series of illegal rallies ever since.

Iran's deputy police commander, on Saturday, warned against the mass gatherings, asserting that those who engage in any such actions would be severely reprimanded.

Earlier on Saturday, MKO leader Maryam Rajavi had supported the recent wave of street violence in Iran during a Saturday address to supporters in Paris.

Rajavi had reportedly described the MKO terrorists as the real winners of the Iranian election.

The Mujahedin Khalq Organization is a Marxist guerilla group, which was founded in the 1960s. In the past two decades, MKO leaders have been resettled in the northern outskirts of Paris.

The terrorists are especially notorious for taking sides with former dictator Saddam Hussein during the war Iraq imposed on Iran (1980-1988).

The group masterminded a slew of terrorist operations in Iran and Iraq -- one of which was the 1981 bombing of the offices of the Islamic Republic Party, in which more than 72 Iranian officials were killed.

A 2007 German intelligence report from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has identified the MKO as a "repressive, sect-like and Stalinist authoritarian organization which centers around the personality cult of [MKO leaders] Maryam and Masoud Rajavi".

Anne Singleton, an expert on the MKO and author of 'Saddam's Private Army' explains that the West aims to keep the group afloat in order to use it in efforts to stage a regime change in Iran.

"With a new Administration in the White House a pre-emptive strike on Iran looks unlikely. Instead the MKO's backers have put together a coalition of small irritant groups, the known minority and separatist groups, along with the MKO. These groups will be garrisoned around the border with Iran and their task is to launch terrorist attacks into Iran over the next few years to keep the fire hot," she explains.

"The role of the MKO is to train and manage these groups using the expertise they acquired from Saddam's Republican Guard," Singleton added.

A May 2005 Human Rights Watch report also condemns the MKO for running prison camps in Iraq and committing human rights violations. According to report, the outlawed group puts defectors under torture and jail terms.

Tension Grows Over Plans to Close Iraq's Camp Ashraf

By JANE ARRAF – Christian Science Monitor - June 30,2009

The Camp Is the Last Place Belonging to the MEK Iranian Opposition Group

Fifty miles from the Iranian border, a tense drama is quietly unfolding as the Iraqi government grapples with the fate of several thousand Iranian opposition members who refuse to fade into history.

The opposition Mujahideen al-Khalq (MEK) has been closely watching the protests next door in Iran over charges of reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It's their wish that the protests somehow topple the entire system of Iran's religious leadership.

The prospect of a change in Iran's government is viewed by many to be as unlikely as the MEK's hope that Iraq will change its mind about shutting down a camp that has been a major irritant in Iranian-Iraqi relations.

In recent weeks, the leadership of Camp Ashraf, the former main military base of the MEK, has accused Iraqi riot police of entering the camp north of Baghdad and threatening some of its 3,400 residents.

Western officials familiar with the case say Interior Ministry rapid deployment forces stopped outside the main gate in what appeared to be a show of force, without going into the camp.

They say, though, that the standoff could very easily turn violent, given the combination of Iraqi troops not known for their restraint and an extremely disciplined organization intent on creating an international incident.

In 2003, several MEK protesters in Paris set fire to themselves to protest the arrest of the organization's leader.

The stakes are so high, say Western officials, because Camp Ashraf, which before the war had its own tanks and mortars, has been central to the wider organization.

"Camp Ashraf is the last place they have," says one Western official. "You have to ask – what is the MEK without it?"

Funded and Armed Under Saddam Hussein

The sprawling camp, with its manicured gardens and tree-lined streets, is a holdover from Iraq's bitter conflict with neighboring Iran, including eight years of war. Under Saddam Hussein, the MEK was funded and armed – launching extensive attacks on Iran from Iraqi soil.

With the fall of the Iraqi regime in 2003, the MEK was disarmed by US forces. The Iraqi government, which along with the United States considers the MEK a terrorist

organization, says its members have no legal right to be here and has asked them to voluntarily return to Iran or to third countries that might take them.

"Without legal status here, they don't exist," says one Western official. "It is an impossible situation."

In a measure of the persistence of the MEK's lobbying efforts targeting government officials, as well as the sensitivity of the issue, all of the officials who spoke about the subject asked to remain anonymous. The Iraqi committee in charge of the issue declined all requests for comment.

The MEK itself, which routinely issues statements accusing Iraqi authorities of trying to kill its members, did not respond to specific questions about plans to relocate the residents.

About 100 of the camp's 3,400 residents are believed to have dual nationality. Another 1,000 have been residents of other countries. Despite the MEK's listing as a terror group by the US and Iraq, the residents of Camp Ashraf are not individually considered terrorists.

Relocation Offers Are Hard to Come by

But in line with comments by the previous head of Iraq's National Security Council describing MEK members here as "brainwashed" and potentially dangerous, persuading other countries to accept more than a few of them has been a very tough sell.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has given about 250 former camp residents refugee status, but so far only a handful of them have been accepted by any country for resettlement, officials say.

About 600 of the camp residents have left voluntarily since 2003. The Iraqi government has said it plans to move the remaining individuals to another region of Iraq, farther from the Iranian border, but has not yet told camp leaders where it intends to relocate them.

"The closer we get to that eventuality, the more tense it will become," says one official, saying whether or not violence broke out would depend on the instructions residents received from the MEK leadership.

In interviews at Camp Ashraf in April, camp residents, under very tight control by the organization and with their contact with family outside restricted, said they would never leave the camp, the only home many of them have known for more than a decade.

One Former Resident's Legal Limbo

Camp leaders provided reams of documents listing the residents under Geneva Conventions as protected persons during the fighting in 2003. But that does not address

the current issue of the residents' lack of legal status in a country that is no longer at war with Iran or under attack by the US.

Some of those who have made the difficult decision to leave Camp Ashraf have found themselves in limbo.

In a hotel in Baghdad's Green Zone in May, an MEK member who had left was waiting for travel documents to be reunited with her daughter whom she had given up 17 years ago at the age of 2.

The woman, who said she did not want to give her real name for fear of Iranian retribution, asked us to call her Zahra. She had been at MEK camps in Iraq for 21 years and had sent her Baghdad-born daughter to be raised by other MEK members abroad after the organization decided to break up families, believing that such attachments hampered their members' commitment to the cause.

"It is difficult for other people to understand. All of us in the camp are political people" dedicated to the overthrow of the Iranian regime, she said.

Zahra was given refugee status in Sweden after being imprisoned in Shiraz as a teenage protester in the 1980s. She said she left Camp Ashraf because it had been difficult in the past year to get physical therapy or pain medication for an injury sustained during a military operation shortly after she arrived in Iraq.

"They [the camp leadership] said to me, 'You can go if you want to,' " she said.

Officials privately said that after Zahra began lobbying on behalf of the MEK with Iraqi members of parliament opposed to the government's decision to close the camp, she was moved across town to a much smaller hotel where several other MEK members are being held while they await documents to leave the country.

In a phone call from her new hotel room, she said she was prevented from leaving the hotel and had gone on a hunger strike. The German Embassy said it was following her case, and other officials said her health did not appear to be in danger.

Iraqi government guards posted in the lobby of the hotel prevented access to her and would not allow the hotel phone to be used to call her room, saying she needed permission from more senior Iraqi officials to talk to anyone.

"It's part of the problem.... The Iraqi government has not decided how it wants to deal with individuals," says one Western official, noting that resettlement to a third country often took months or years. "They have to give them an incentive to want to leave the camp."

BAGHDAD, June 28, 2009