

# ParsBrief

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### MKO Given New Deadline to Leave Camp Ashraf

Fars News Agency – January 28, 2013

Officials of Iraq's Diyala province issued a new warning to the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO, also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCR) to leave their former military headquarters, Camp Ashraf.

According to a report published by Habilia Association, a human rights NGO formed of the families of over 17000 Iranian terror victims, a responsible source in the town of Khalis, 50 km north of Baghdad where Camp Ashraf is located, said the officials have set the February 9, 2013, as the new deadline for MKO to withdraw all its members from Camp Ashraf.

The source added that the Diyala Operations Command is responsible to inform the remaining elements of the MKO in this regard.

The relocation is in line with the memorandum of understanding signed on 25 December, 2011, between Iraq and United Nations to temporarily transfer members of the terrorist MKO group to a former US military base near the Baghdad International Airport for the UNHCR to determine their refugee status.

So far, over 3100 of the group's members have been transferred to their transient home in Camp Liberty. Although the Iraqi government's patience is wearing thin and Baghdad has repeatedly insisted the closure of the Camp Ashraf, around 100 members of the MKO, who were due to leave shortly, are still in the camp in a move to provide the ground for "selling the property" in there.

### 17 MKO members defect from terrorist group, reports say

Press TV – December 23, 2012

A group of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) members have reportedly defected from the terrorist group as internal dissensions intensify within the MKO.

At least 17 MKO members have fled Camp Liberty near the Iraqi capital of Baghdad so far in December.

They have requested UN officials in Baghdad to help them leave Iraq and seek asylum in a European country.

A former MKO member, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he managed to escape from the former US military base near Baghdad International Airport on December 5, despite strict measures and tight controls on the movements of all MKO terrorists.

The MKO fled to Iraq in 1986, where it enjoyed the support of Iraq's former dictator Saddam Hussein, and set up its camp near the Iranian border.

The group is known to have cooperated with Saddam in suppressing the 1991 uprisings in southern Iraq and carrying out the massacre of Iraqi Kurds.

The MKO has carried out numerous acts of violence against Iranian civilians and government officials.

#### Ex-MKO member slams UK terror support

Press TV - December 19, 2012

A former member of the anti-Iranian Mujahedeen-e Khalq Organization (MKO) has denounced Britain and the West for supporting the internationally condemned terrorist group.

In an interview with Press TV's political program 'The Monarchy', former MKO member Massoud Khodabandeh pointed out that the anti-Iranian terrorist group would not survive without support from Britain and other Western states.

"I don't see any terrorist organization capable of continuing, unless somebody wants it. Somebody has got to want this terrorist organization [MKO], somebody has got to finance it and somebody has got to arm it," Khodabandeh said.

"One of the reasons that I am saying they have support is; not facing them directly to stop their violent activities in the West and to stop their money laundering in the West. When I say money laundering, I have been in it, I have seen it. This is not an unknown concept for the British government", he added.

This comes as an unnamed British company recently bought the movable property of Camp Ashraf, located in the eastern Iraqi province of Diyala near the Iranian border, worth \$25 million. The UK company also plans to buy the former home of the MKO terrorists.

During the interview, Khodabandeh was asked if the MKO terrorists pose a threat to British citizens. The former member replied by referring to the incident in 2003 where two members of the MKO cult died while setting themselves on fire in London, as well as other members of the group carrying out the same act in other European capitals.

"Can you imagine if someone can burn himself or herself by order? It is much easier to kill me," Khodabandeh warned.

Moreover, Khodabandeh explained that the current members of the MKO at the camp in Iraq are treated like hostages and are denied being up-to-date with modern society such as; not being able to use a mobile phone and not understanding the changes in the language of the people of Iran.

#### Canada's delisting of MEK 'dangerous': Iran

AFP - December 25, 2012

Iran on Monday slammed Canada for removing an exiled Iranian opposition group from its blacklist of terror groups, accusing it of violating its global commitments and adopting a "dangerous" move.

By delisting the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK) group, Canada is "using the issue of terrorism as a tool (and) violating its international commitments," the Iranian foreign ministry said on the website of state broadcaster IRIB.

"It is a dangerous move that can weaken international peace and security."

Canada on December 21 announced the removal of the group from its blacklist after a similar move by the United States in September.

The Iranian foreign ministry issued a "serious warning" about the consequences of the decision to delist MEK, saying it was turning Canada into a "haven for terrorists."

It said Iran will hold Canada responsible for preserving the security of Iranian expatriates and properties "in case of any violent and terrorist acts" by the MEK.

### MEK seeks Syria-style recognition

AFP - December 06,2012

Mujahedin-e Khalq terrorist group on Wednesday launched a campaign to have France and the European Union grant it the same recognition they have accorded to the Syrian coalition battling to overthrow Bashar al-Assad.

"The West's biggest political error has been to ignore the key movement for change in Iran," said Maryam Radjavi, the president of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI).

"International sanctions against Iran have been positive but they will only be effective if the West changes policy towards the resistance. The only solution in Iran is a change of regime by the Iranian people."

Radjavi was speaking at France's National Assembly, where a group of 10 deputies from across the political spectrum has launched a petition calling on the government to recognise the Iranian resistance.

France was the first Western power to recognise Syria's opposition coalition as the "sole" representatives of the Syrian people. The European Union and the United States have upgraded its status to "legitimate representatives".

The People's Mujahedeen of Iran (MEK), also led by Radjavi, is the largest component of the NCRI.

The United States decided in September to revoke the MEK's designation as a terrorist organisation in a move seen as paving the way for closer cooperation on action against the Islamist government in Iran.

### Iraqi Deputy FM: No Country Willing to Shelter MKO Terrorists

Fars News, January 22 ,2013

No country in the world accepts to shelter members of the anti-Iran terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Labid al-Abawi stressed on Monday.

"The UN is in talks with some immigrant-accepting countries to convince them to shelter the MKO members, but no country has yet accepted to shelter them," Abawi told FNA when asked about the latest developments in relation to the expulsion of the MKO members from Iraq.

"The group is now in the transit Camp Liberty in Baghdad and the UN will start their transition as soon as a third country is found for them," he added.

Labawi said that the Iraqi government has complied with all its undertakings in this regard in a bid to ensure the rapid expulsion of the terrorist MKO from its soil.

The MKO is behind a slew of assassinations and bombings inside Iran, a number of EU parliamentarians said in a recent letter in which they slammed a British court decision to remove the MKO from the British terror list. The EU officials also added that the group has no public support within Iran because of their role in helping Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi imposed war on Iran (1980-1988).

Many of the MKO members abandoned the terrorist organization while most of those still remaining in the group are said to be willing to quit but are under pressure and torture not to do so.

A May 2005 Human Rights Watch report accused the MKO of running prison camps in Iraq and committing human rights violations.

According to the Human Rights Watch report, the outlawed group puts defectors under torture and jail terms.

The group, founded in the 1960s, blended elements of Islamism and Stalinism and participated in the overthrow of the US-backed Shah of Iran in 1979. Ahead of the revolution, the MKO conducted attacks and assassinations against both Iranian and Western targets.

The group started assassination of the citizens and officials after the revolution in a bid to take control of the newly established Islamic Republic. It killed several of Iran's new leaders in the early years after the revolution, including the then President, Mohammad Ali Rajayee, Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar and the Judiciary Chief, Mohammad Hossein Beheshti who were killed in bomb attacks by MKO members in 1981.

The group fled to Iraq in 1986, where it was protected by Saddam Hussein and where it helped the Iraqi dictator suppress Shiite and Kurd uprisings in the country.

The terrorist group joined Saddam's army during the Iraqi imposed war on Iran (1980-1988) and helped Saddam and killed thousands of Iranian civilians and soldiers during the US-backed Iraqi imposed war on Iran.

Since the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the group, which now adheres to a pro-free-market philosophy, has been strongly backed by neo-conservatives in the United States, who argued for the MKO to be taken off the US terror list.

The US formally removed the MKO from its list of terror organizations in early September, one week after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent the US Congress a classified communication about the move. The decision made by Clinton enabled the group to have its assets under US jurisdiction unfrozen and do business with American entities, the State Department said in a statement at the time.

## Iraq; Several mass graves unearthed in former MKO camp, Camp Ashraf

Press TV- January 03, 2013

An Iraqi official says several mass graves have been unearthed in Camp New Iraq, formerly known as Camp Ashraf, in Iraq's Diyala Province, which was the headquarters of the terrorist Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO).

Sadeq al-Husseini, the deputy chairman of Diyala's provincial council said that the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights was in charge of determining the identities of the bodies and whether they were Kurds, the residents of southern provinces or from the town of Khalis in Diyala Province.

He said that the bodies were being examined in medical laboratories in Arbil Province, adding that human rights violations in the camp did not seem improbable.

The MKO is responsible for numerous acts of terror and violence against Iranian civilians and officials.

The group fled to Iraq in 1986, where it received the support of Iraq's executed dictator Saddam Hussein and set up its camp near the Iranian border.

Out of nearly 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist attacks since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, 12,000 of them have fallen victim to the acts of terror carried out by the MKO.

The group also sided with Saddam during Iraq's eight-year imposed war against the Islamic Republic.

Martin Kobler: The Government of Iraq's patience is wearing thin. Ashraf residents should cooperate

UN News, December 01, 2012

29 November 2012 – Highlighting improvements in relations between Iraq and Kuwait, the United Nations top official in Iraq today said that progress will “depend on the restoration of confidence between both sides” and encouraged further momentum from the two countries.

In a briefing to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle Eastern country, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Martin Kobler, noted how, earlier this year, Iraq demonstrated renewed commitment to improving its bilateral relations with Kuwait, and how he had “stepped-up” engagement with the two countries to see how the UN could best help resolve any outstanding issues in accordance with relevant Council resolutions.

“In this context, I recently held high-level meetings in Iraq and Kuwait where I was encouraged by the strong commitment that both Prime Minister Maliki and the Amir of Kuwait expressed to normalizing relations between their two countries,” Mr. Kobler said. “I very much hope that they will now be able to move quickly and they can count on the UN in this regard.”

Relations between the two countries were affected by Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The following year, the Security Council established the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC), which settles the damage claims of those who suffered losses in the invasion.

So far, the amount of compensation disbursed by the UNCC totals \$37.7 billion for more than 1.5 million successful claims of individuals, corporations, Governments and international organizations. Successful claims are paid with funds drawn from the UN Compensation Fund, which is funded by a percentage of the proceeds generated by the export sales of Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products.

In his remarks, Mr. Kobler appealed to the Government of Iraq to "continue to demonstrate the goodwill necessary to fulfil Iraq's other outstanding obligations, in particular to missing persons and property." He noted how its commitment to fulfil these obligations will be conducive to the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

"I equally call on the Government of Kuwait to continue to act in a spirit of flexibility and reciprocity as reflected earlier this year by the important reciprocal visits of the Amir in Baghdad and Prime Minister Maliki in Kuwait," he said, adding that he remains fully committed to working with both Governments to resolve bilateral issues, at their request.

In his briefing, in addition to a range of other issues related to Iraq, the envoy also addressed the situation affecting Iranian exiles located in a camp outside of the capital, Baghdad, urging the international community to come forward with offers for their resettlement.

"I wish to emphasize that Camp Liberty was only meant to be an interim facility to facilitate the Refugee Status Determination and subsequent resettlement in third countries," the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Martin Kobler, told a Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle Eastern country.

"I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to offer resettlement opportunities to former residents of Camp Ashraf – without such an undertaking, there can be no sustainable solution for the residents," he added.

In line with a memorandum of understanding signed in December by the UN and the Iraqi Government to resolve the situation, more than 3,100 of the 3,280 residents originally in Camp Ashraf – now also known as Camp New Iraq – have been re-located to a temporary transit location near Baghdad, known as Camp Hurriya – and formerly known as Camp Liberty – where a process to determine refugee status is being carried out by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There are 100 residents left in Camp Ashraf.

The issue of Camp Ashraf – located in eastern Iraq and once made up of several thousand Iranian exiles, many of them members of a group known as the People's Mojahedeen of Iran – has been one of the main issues dealt with by UNAMI for more than a year.

"The Government of Iraq insists to close Camp Ashraf in the next days," Mr. Kobler said. "It requested the last 100 residents be relocated to Camp Hurriya."

He noted that UNAMI has spared no effort over the last weeks to help facilitate meetings between involved parties – however, these efforts have been unsuccessful so far, leading to a stalemate.

“The Government of Iraq considers this stalemate as an attempt by the residents to delay the relocation of the remaining 100 persons,” Mr. Kobler said. “The Government of Iraq’s patience is, therefore, wearing thin. I call on the residents of Ashraf to cooperate with the Government of Iraq to solve all outstanding questions related to property.”

The envoy also called on the Government of Iraq to maintain the peaceful relocation of the residents as stipulated in the memorandum of understanding, to demonstrate restraint, and be as flexible as possible when it comes to resolving property-related issues.

In addition, he noted that UN staff who monitor the human rights and humanitarian situation of the residents of Camp Hurriya on a daily basis are often denied access to certain areas of the site which “hinders the performance of their duties.”

“I urge the residents to engage constructively with the Government of Iraq and the United Nations so that Camp Ashraf can be closed peacefully and efforts can focus on the residents’ resettlement to third countries,” he added.

### 30,000 Iranian spies? Library of Congress withdraws report

Justin Elliott/Christian Science Monitor – January 24, 2013

A US Library of Congress report asserting that Iran's Intelligence agency has 30,000 employees has been widely quoted – and criticized. The report has been withdrawn and is now under 30,000 Iranian spies? Library of Congress withdraws report revision.

An official with the Library of Congress says a widely cited but poorly sourced report his office did on Iran's intelligence ministry has been pulled from circulation.

As we detailed last week, the study's ill-supported claim that the Iranian intelligence ministry has 30,000 employees was picked up by CNN and others. News outlets have also seized on other assertions in the report.

The report, which was produced on behalf of a Pentagon office, had been posted on a non-public government-only website. It was leaked earlier this month.

"The report was pulled for revisions after the Division staff identified a passage that should have been caveated but was missed in the initial reviews," said Federal Research Division chief David Osborne in an email. "The report will be re-posted when revised."

Osborne declined to specify the passage in question. It might have had nothing to do with the 30,000 figure.

Another section of the report prompted a married couple branded as spies for Iran to consider legal action.

The report flatly claims that a British woman and her Iranian-born husband are operatives for Iran's intelligence ministry. The husband, Massoud Khodabandeh, is a former-member-turned-fierce-critic of the Mujahadin-e Khalq (MEK), a small exile group that has long fought the government of Iran and was recently removed from the U.S. government's list of terrorist organizations.

The report even includes their pictures.

The report's source for the spy claim is a 2007 essay published on a now-defunct website by Rabbi Daniel Zucker, who is chair of a group called Americans for Democracy in the Middle East and has frequently written in support of the MEK.

The Zucker piece in turn cites a 2005 post on another now-defunct pro-MEK website called iranterror.com. That site also states Khodabandeh and his wife are operatives for Iranian intelligence, but does not offer any sources or evidence.

Even though it relied on questionable sourcing, the report effectively extended the imprimatur of the U.S. government to the claim that the couple are spies.

Asked about the various criticisms of the report, Pentagon spokeswoman Anne Edgecomb told ProPublica: "We believe its findings will enrich the discussions and concepts of policy makers."

She declined to comment further.

The MEK's official website seized on the government report this month, publishing an item claiming that "a recent investigative report by [the] Pentagon ... revealed that Anne and Massoud Khodabandeh are agents of the mullahs' Ministry of Intelligence and Security."

Khodabandeh and his wife, Anne, who also worked with the MEK in the 1980s and 90s, were incensed by the government report.

"Everything they've said is just made up," Anne Khodabandeh told ProPublica.

Massoud Khodabandeh wrote a response column on Huffington Post blasting the report for its reliance on pro-MEK sources. The couple, who are based in the United Kingdom, run an anti-MEK website and consider the group a dangerous cult. (That charge that has been echoed by some outside observers but rejected by the MEK.)

The study claims that after Khodabandeh left the MEK in 1996, he and Anne "agreed to work for [Iran's intelligence ministry] and spy on MEK." It claims that the intelligence ministry used threats against Khodabandeh's family in Tehran to compel the couple to cooperate.

Earlier this month, Anne Khodabandeh emailed Osborne, the Federal Research Division chief, saying that "my solicitor would like to know the actual provenance of the report for further action." Osborne responded that the report had been pulled down for (again unspecified) revisions.

"The fact that the document was leaked to [Washington Free Beacon reporter] Mr. Bill Gertz or otherwise publicized is not the fault of the Library of Congress," Osborne wrote Jan. 9. "It is not and will not be posted to any Library of Congress site."

Anne Khodabandeh told ProPublica she and her husband are holding off on legal action at this point because of the potential expense involved, and the fact that the report does not name its author.