

# ParsBrief

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## Iraqi militia takes credit for rocket attack targeting Iranian dissident camp

Deutsche Welle - DW, October31, 2015

Iraqi militia have threatened more attacks following a rocket barrage that killed at least 26 people at an opposition camp near Baghdad. UN chief Ban Ki-moon has condemned the attack.

Camp Hurriya (Liberty), a former US military base, has housed members of the People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran (PMOI) since 2012, a group that had fought alongside Saddam Hussein's forces in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.

On Thursday at least 15 rockets crashed in and around the camp near Baghdad's international airport killing more than two dozen people.

Iraqi joint operations command spokesman Yahya Rasool said investigation is underway and that two Iraqi soldiers were wounded in the attack. An abandoned truck mounted with rocket tubes had been recovered in Bakriya, north of the camp, he said.

"The people behind this attack are terrorist criminals who want to destabilize the country," Yasol told Reuters news agency, without specifying any group or nation.

### **Shiite militia warns of further attacks**

A Shiite Muslim militia in Iraq has claimed responsibility for the attack – the deadliest in years – that targets the Iranian opposition.

"We warned the members of this terrorist organization to leave Iraq as soon as possible ... If they don't do so, there will be more similar attacks," al-Mukhtar Army commander Wathiq al-Battat was quoted as saying by Iran's Fars news agency.

The PMOI stands accused by rights groups of taking part in the brutal suppression of a 1991 Shiite uprising against Saddam Hussein, making it widely reviled by members of Iraq's own Shiite Arab majority, which came to power after the US-led Iraq invasion in 2003.

## **EU, UN, US line up to condemn attack**

UN chief Ban Ki-moon "condemns the attack... on Camp Hurriya, near the Baghdad International Airport, which left at least 26 residents dead and many more wounded," the general secretary's office said Friday in a statement.

"This is a most deplorable act, and I am greatly concerned at the harm that has been inflicted on those living at Camp Liberty." the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres said. "Every effort must continue to be made for the injured and to identify and bring to account those responsible."

US Secretary of State John Kerry said efforts to relocate the members – in the works for years – should be accelerated.

"No matter the circumstances, on this point we remain absolute: the United States remains committed to assisting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the relocation of all Camp Hurriya residents to a permanent and safe location outside of Iraq," Kerry said in a statement.

"It is crucial that the Iraqi government fully investigate the incident and immediately step up security at the camp in line with its duty of protection of the camp residents under the December 2011 agreement with the United Nations," the EU's external affairs office said in a statement.

## **PMOI had been delisted as a 'terror organization'**

Until a few years ago, PMOI -- also known by its Farsi name Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) -- was listed as a terrorist organization by both the US and the European Union.

Shahin Gobadi, a PMOI spokesman, accused "agents of the clerical (Iranian) regime inside the government of Iraq" of launching the attack and also placed responsibility on the Iraqi government and the United Nations.

The group, which critics have described as a cult, enjoys a well-connected network of former and current officials who advocate on its behalf.

Following an intensive lobbying campaign, it succeeded in being removed from the US and EU terror lists.

But around 3,000 remaining dissidents at Camp Hurriya are still waiting to be relocated to other countries.

## UNHCR Update on the situation of Camp Liberty residents

UNHCR, Geneva, October 30, 2015

Update No. 12

Update on the situation of residents of the Hurriya Temporary Transit Location

- UNHCR strongly condemns rocket attacks of 29 October 2015 which hit several precincts in the vicinity of Baghdad International Airport, including the Hurriya Temporary Transit Location (TTL) (also known as Camp Liberty). The impact on the Hurriya TTL resulted in the deaths of more than 20 residents and dozens of others were taken to hospitals for treatment of injuries sustained in the attack.
- Following the attack the High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres made the following statement: “This is a most deplorable act, and I am greatly concerned at the harm that has been inflicted on those living at Camp Liberty. Every effort must continue to be made for the injured and to identify and bring to account those responsible.”
- UNHCR and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) have been working since 2011 to find relocation opportunities outside Iraq for residents of the Hurriya TTL. These people formerly resided at Camp Ashraf (also known as Camp New Iraq). Approximately 2,160 of this group remain in the Hurriya TTL.
- UNHCR considers that all residents of the Hurriya TTL who are registered with UNHCR are persons of concern to UNHCR. They are entitled to protection against expulsion or forced movement to any place where their lives or freedom would be threatened. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations explicitly recognizes that residents benefit from the principle of non-refoulement.
- Working with States and its partners UNHCR has supported the relocation of more than 900 residents to safe third countries since 2011. The solutions being delivered by UNHCR are current with more than 260 residents relocated since July 2015. Arrangements are in place to relocate in excess of 200 more people by the end of 2015.
- UNHCR deeply appreciates the measures taken by some countries already to relocate residents to situations of safety and security. Albania’s exceptional contribution to this humanitarian endeavor merits special note. These measures contribute greatly to international efforts to find solutions for this group of people.
- UNHCR urgently renews its calls upon governments of other countries to find ways to offer long term solutions for the residents who remain at the Hurriya TTL. If long term solutions cannot be made available immediately, the urgent need to relocate the residents

would justify an extraordinary evacuation to a safer temporary platform from where they could be permanently relocated to a third country. UNHCR stands ready to assist states in achieving this objective.

- This appeal for help should be read in light of the potential for more attacks on the Hurriya TTL. As well as the attack of October 2015, residents of the Hurriya TLL suffered three rocket attacks in 2013, each of which resulted in deaths and injuries. There was also an attack on Camp New Iraq in September 2013 which left 52 dead and seven persons missing. The latest attack demonstrates that the current conflict and generalized violence across Iraq leaves residents of the Hurriya TTL open to significantly heightened security risks and it emphasizes the need for a quick and pragmatic action on the part of States to ensure that these people are relocated to a situation of safety and security.
- UNHCR continues to call upon the Government of Iraq to take all possible measures to ensure the safety and well-being of residents, including ensuring access to life saving medical treatment.

### US War in Syria, Iraq Part of Bigger Plan Aimed Against Iran and Beyond

IZAKOVIC, Rumormillnews, October18, 2016

In Response To: WWII PROCEEDINGS: Residents of Syria help Russian military to target terrorists (IZAKOVIC)

The Syrian conflict is not an isolated crisis but a part of the US' bigger plan aimed at Iran and beyond, Toni Cartalucci explains, pointing out that it is the Fortune 500 companies, centered on Wall Street and London, which are dragging the MENA region into chaos.

Western political analysts regard the "balkanization" of Syria as the only option to "solve" the ongoing Syrian crisis; indeed, weakened and fragmented Syria is considered a potential foothold to target Iran and other players in the region, Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Tony Cartalucci underscores.

It is naïve to believe that Washington's proposals for a "political transition" or the partitioning of Syria will lead to peace and stability in the Middle East.

"It will not be the end of regional conflict, but rather the end of just the beginning. The successful destruction of Syria will portend war with Iran and beyond," Cartalucci stresses in his recent article for New Eastern Outlook.

The geopolitical researcher called attention to the Brookings Institution's analysis paper written in 2009 by a group of US scholars, including Michael O'Hanlon, co-director of the

Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence at the Brookings Institution and Kenneth M. Pollack, a prominent former CIA intelligence analyst.

"In this signed and dated criminal conspiracy, methods for covertly overthrowing the Iranian government with US-backed mobs augmented with armed militants, the use of US listed foreign terrorist organizations to wage a proxy war against Iran, the provocation of open war with Iran, and the use of Israel to unilaterally attack Iran first, before bringing America inevitably into the war shortly after, are all described in great detail throughout the 156 page report," Cartalucci underscored.

The researcher pointed to the fact that US policy-makers had no scruples about removing the infamous terrorist organization Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) from the US State Department's foreign terrorist organization list in 2012 in order to use it in Washington's covert war against Iran.

The ongoing conflict in Syria is just a part of a bigger game.

"Clearly the problem is larger than Syria, and even larger than the geopolitical chaos the US has created arcing over the MENA region," Cartalucci stressed, adding that the ongoing strife is fuelled by big-finance, big-defense, big-telecom and other representatives of global corporatocracy.

It is the Fortune 500, centered on Wall Street and London, who are adding fuel to the fire in the Middle East, he noted.

In light of this, Moscow's efforts to "solve Syria" have acquired a new meaning.

In fact, Russia has upset Washington's plans and shifted the balance of power in the MENA region as a whole.

"Russia's decision to defend the sovereign government of Syria and assist in the elimination of Syria's enemies within its borders, as well as the warding off of its enemies beyond them is the most immediate course of action to 'solve Syria.' Inviting Iran and even China to take part in a larger campaign to secure Syria's borders and assisting in the restoration of order within the country is a concrete next step. Expanding this coalition to cover Iraq next will create a geopolitical 'no-meddling-zone' the West will find itself outside of," the geopolitical researcher elaborated.

By its decision to step in in Syria Moscow has clearly demonstrated Russia's commitment to the concept of a multi-polar world. And a multi-polar world means a distribution of global power, global responsibility and wealth, he stressed.

"Solving Syria truly, means solving the problem presented to us by the prevailing unipolar order itself. It is not a battle simply for Syria and its allies to fight within the borders of

Syria, but a battle for all who oppose unipolar global hegemony to fight. Maybe not with bullets, bombs, and missiles, but a fight nonetheless," Cartalucci concluded.

### Beware of Exiles and Their Promises

Daniel Larison, *The American Conservative*, January 01, 2016

Emma Ashford points out some of the dangers of making policy with the guidance of self-interested exiles:

Policymakers in Washington are not blameless in this. A recent invitation by Congress to the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK), an Iranian opposition group, to testify before the House Subcommittee on Terrorism on issues relating to Iran and ISIS highlights how little scrutiny such groups sometimes face. Though certainly a vocal opponent of the regime in Tehran, MEK was only removed by the State Department from the list of foreign terrorist organizations in 2012, after heavily lobbying Congress. The group is communist and is often described as a cult. It is so extreme and so unrepresentative of the Iranian opposition in general that other regional experts testifying before Congress refused to appear on the same panel.

Ashford is right about all of this, and she had more to say along these lines in her excellent presentation at our conference in November. I would just add that the failure of policymakers goes beyond the lack of scrutiny applied to exile groups and individuals. Many policymakers are so preoccupied with hostility towards a certain regime that they will go out of their way to find and promote the exiles that share their position, and they will do so knowing that the exiles aren't what they claim to be. They will then boast that a position held by a few Westerners and an extremely unrepresentative exile group represents "the will" of the nation in question. The support of the exiles "legitimizes" the hawks' desire for regime change by providing "evidence" that U.S. interference will be welcomed (useful for P.R. purposes if for nothing else), and the hawks' backing gives the exiles a stamp of approval in Washington.

The ongoing rehabilitation of the MEK is a good example of this. Most Iranians in Iran and around the world detest the MEK for good reason, but to listen to their many fans in and out of government one would think that they area democratic government-in-waiting and that cult leader Maryam Rajavi is Liberty incarnate. That allows many Iran hawks to align themselves openly with a group that is rejected by Iranians everywhere while presenting

themselves as champions of the “Iranian people” against their government. The views and preferences of the people in the other country are of no concern for the hawks except insofar as they can be misrepresented to support their preferred policy. The exiles pretend to speak for their country, and their patrons here pretend to believe them. Maybe a few are genuinely gullible enough to believe that a totalitarian cult is Iran’s real “secular, democratic opposition,” but most can’t be that clueless and are cynically indulging a horrible organization for their own reasons.

Something similar happens with political oppositions in other countries that don’t have much representation in Washington. Instead of accepting the promises of exiles, many interventionists will claim to know the goals of a foreign opposition movement because those happen to be their goals. They will cite the opposition’s imaginary preferences in our policy debates to insist that the U.S. ought to be doing what they claim the opposition wants. Iran hawks adopted the Green movement protests because they wrongly saw them as an opportunity to destabilize and even topple the regime, and they faulted Obama for “missing” that opportunity by not “doing more” to support them. It didn’t matter to them that most protesters didn’t want U.S. help, and it also didn’t matter that the protesters weren’t seeking regime change. Iran hawks deemed the protests worthy of U.S. support in large part because they perceived them to have the potential to bring down the regime, and once it became clear that this wasn’t going to happen they lost interest in the Iranian opposition until it was time to draft them into the campaign against the nuclear deal very much against their will.

In all of this, U.S. interests are entirely neglected, and more often than not the interests of the exiles’ country are also ignored, and both countries end up being ill-served by the ambitions of exiles and the delusions of hawks.