

Open Letter to President Obama

Delist MEK(PMOI) Now Protect Camp Ashraf

Dear President Obama,

October 3, 2011

We are writing to you with urgency to underline the need for an immediate decision to remove Iran's opposition group the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK) from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). The FTO list is a valuable tool for denying Organizations "that threaten the United States" an opportunity to operate freely in our country. The MEK were placed on the list in 1997. Since that time, the governments of our closest allies, the United Kingdom and the European Union, have recently taken the MEK off their terrorist list after a court in England declared their description as a terrorist organization as "perverse."

As you are aware the D.C. Court of Appeals held that Secretary Rice's decision to continue placing the MEK on the FTO list "did not meet the statutory standard for listing as an FTO." The Court ordered the State Department to review the listing and the date the court gave for that review has long since passed.

All of us have looked at the evidence in this case and it is clear to us that the MEK is not a terrorist organization. Many of us have first hand knowledge of the MEK, having served in Iraq or been part of investigations of the group. Even more persuasive is the fact that since 2001 not a single open source terrorism data base has recorded an incident of violence by the MEK at all let alone directed at the United States or its allies.

A review of the facts makes it absolutely clear that there is not a single shred of evidence to meet the statutory standard necessary to classify the MEK as a terrorist organization. We should delist them immediately.

We also are writing to ask you to take immediate steps to insure the safety of 3,400 MEK members who are currently at Camp Ashraf in Iraq. In 2004, the United States guaranteed, in writing, to every one of the residents that if they relinquished their weapons, then the United States would protect them. But, tragically, on two occasions - one in 2009 and one just a few months ago - the residents of Ashraf were brutally attacked, while defenseless. This year, attack was carried out by Iraqi soldiers using United States weapons and vehicles, they killed 36 residents, including 8 women, and injured over 300 people. The assault was captured on videotape, which you can review. Shamefully and shockingly, U.S. Troops stationed near the Camp were ordered to leave the area only hours before the attack.

The two issues - the designation and the attacks - unfortunately are connected. One of the reasons given for the attack is the continued U.S. designation. Since that designation has now been removed by the E.U. and the U.K., in effect only the Iranian regime is left supporting our continued designation which has long since been devoid of any factual basis. It is urgent that we also remove it so it can't be misused by Iraq as an excuse for slaughtering innocent people.

The United Nations has classified the residents of Ashraf as "asylum seekers" and has expressed a willingness to send monitors into the camp to ensure their safety. They are hesitant to do so, because they don't believe the monitors could be adequately protected. We call on you to provide U.S. troops to protect the monitors and the residents as we promised to do so seven years ago.

Names are in alphabetical order:

Ambassador John Bolton

Judge Michael Mukasey

Secretary Andrew Card

Ambassador Mitchell Reiss

General James Conway

Governor Ed Rendell

Governor Howard Dean

Secretary Tom Ridge

Director Louis Freeh

General Hugh Shelton

Mayor Rudy Giuliani

Senator Robert Torricelli

Congressman Patrick Kennedy

General Charles F. Wald

Camp Ashraf, 60 miles northeast of Baghdad, is home to 3,400 members of Iran's principal opposition movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (PMOI/MEK). Some 1,000 of the residents are women and one-third are former political prisoners in Iran, who survived the Iranian regime's reign of terror and found safe haven across the border. Hundreds of university graduates from the United States and Europe joined them in the campaign to establish a secular, democratic, and non-nuclear republic in Iran. In July 2004, they were recognized as "Protected Persons" under the Fourth Geneva Convention. On April 8, 2011, Iraqi forces, acting at the behest of Tehran, attacked Ashraf, killing 35 and wounding hundreds more. In a similar assault in July 2009, eleven residents were killed.