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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Women's Human Rights International Association (WHRIA), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 August 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Humanitarian needs of 1000 female Ashraf-Liberty residents and their resettlement is a priority

The appalling situation of 3'400 Iranian dissidents in Camp Ashraf, Iraq, including a thousand women, has long been in the centre of international attention.

Protected by the fourth Geneva Convention, these asylum-seekers have for many years lived in Camp Ashraf. In July 2009 and April 2011, the Iraqi forces attacked the defenceless residents of Camp Ashraf leading to the death of 47 persons, including eight women, while hundreds were wounded. UNHCR and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned Iraq for the use of violence against the unarmed and defenceless residents.

To prevent further bloodshed, the 3'400 asylum-seekers agreed to move to Camp Liberty, near Baghdad airport and since 17 February, 2'000 of them have moved in five convoys to this camp. The fifth convoy were mainly women who moved on May 4. During the relocation, these women were inspected for seven days due to deliberate delays and obstructions by the Iraqi forces. The transfer of scores of items and facilities that were needed by these women in Liberty was not permitted. Iraqi forces did not allow transfer of the special vehicles and trailers for the disabled and all the water, sewage and fuel tankers of this convoy were returned to Ashraf from midway to Liberty.

According to an opinion adopted by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions in July 2012, Camp Liberty is more like a prison than a refugee camp where the asylum-seekers particularly women are being denied their basic humanitarian and human rights and the Government of Iraq is constantly breaching all its commitments and agreements.

Life of 1000 women in Camp Liberty under living conditions below the minimum standards is of great concern to us. Therefore, necessary actions should be taken to prevent their long stay in this camp while improving the living conditions to meet the humanitarian international standards for as long as they are there.

In this context, we urge:

- The UNSG and his Special Representative as well as the US government to ensure fulfilment of the residents' humanitarian needs such as water, electricity and special facilities for the disabled and also to compel the Government of Iraq to allow the residents to build asphalt pathways, canopies and porches in the camp for disabled and the elderly, to transfer their own vehicles and fork-lifts from Ashraf and to sell their properties to spend the money for their living costs in Camp Liberty.
- The UNSG and his Special Representative to expedite the resettlement of 1000 women of Camp Liberty in third countries.
- The member states to accept these women to be resettled in their countries.