



International Conference in Geneva
September 22, 2011

UN urged to station observers in Ashraf until full completion of residents' resettlement



From left : General James Conway, Louis Freeh, Jean-Charles Rielle, Nils Dedardel, Michael Mukasey, Mitchell Reiss, John Bruton, Eric Sottas, Edward Rendell, Maryam Rajavi, Matthew Offord, Rudy Giuliani, Remy Pagani.

In an international conference held in Geneva on Thursday, September 22, 2011 by the Swiss Committee in Defense of Ashraf, prominent European and American dignitaries and personalities expressed their deep concerns about intentions of the Iranian regime and the Iraqi government against residents of Ashraf and especially the illegally set deadline of December 2011 for closing the camp. Mr Eric Sottas moderated the conference.

Maryam Rajavi: As far as Ashraf is concerned, after the partial recognition of the rights of the residents by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Secretary General and the Commissioner for Human Rights should take the initiative to protect Ashraf residents.

Rudy Giuliani: The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights can just, with the stroke of a pen, set up a monitorship for Ashraf. That decision should be made now, without delay, without going through hurdles and all kinds of bureaucratic procedures.

Edward Rendell: Every day that we don't protect Ashraf, every day that the MEK remains on the terrorist list is a potential danger. In the name of the American democracy, in the name of human rights, the time to act is now.

Judge Michael Mukasey: The USA has to stop just being a great power and start acting and behaving like a great power and show that the words of Abraham Lincoln, who described the US as the last best hope of earth are in fact even truer today than when he first spoke them.

John Bruton: The European Union which has already given one billion Euros towards reconstruction of Iraq...If further assistance is to be given to Iraq, I think that should be made conditional on insuring that the sovereign nation of Iraq exercises the sovereign responsibilities to protect the people of Camp Ashraf.

General James Conway: In the US military we teach marines that even when you're in combat you have a moral responsibility. I fear we do not have time. But I certainly advocate that a first best step is de-listing the MEK, providing protection for the people at Ashraf.

Günter Verheugen: The situation is critical. There is a deadline that is not yet removed; I don't see any system of guaranteed protection. And therefore, it is time for Europeans to act. I have seen enough. No more nice words. Action is now required, action at the very top of the UN, action in our relationship with Iraq, and action in our relationship with the US.

Louis Freeh: The designation remaining as it is today, is a licence to kill, not only to the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corp and its agents but to the Iraqi government as was witnessed so brutally on April 8th of this year.

Jean-Charles Rielle: I know that a first step has been made to recognize the asylum seeker request. Today, for people of Ashraf to be protected, it is essential that UNHCR recognizes their status as refugees

Giorgio Bornacin: I believe that the United Nations should have acted much sooner on this issue. We do not understand the reason for their lack of action.



Rudy Giuliani, Former Mayor of New York and a 2008 Presidential Candidate:

Now, there's a decision pending here in Geneva that is of critical importance. The UN High Commission can just, with the stroke of a pen, set up a monitorship for Ashraf. A monitorship by the United Nations. That decision should be made now, without delay, without going through hurdles and all kinds of bureaucratic procedures. Because the longer it takes, the more people will be injured, the more people that may be murdered. So we should all, with one voice, demand that the Commissioner make that decision as soon as

she returns from New York. Immediately! Not three days from now. Not a week from now. Not a month from now. But now!

I am ashamed that my country turned its back on those people. I remember a different kind of America. I remember the people of Poland seeking freedom. And I remember an American president, Ronald Reagan, standing with the people of Poland. I remember him going to the Berlin Wall and saying, "Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Well, we need that kind of leadership now. We need that kind of leadership from America. And from the Western world. To say to Iran: "Tear down the mullahs, tear down the theocracy and throw out Ahmadinejad".



Michael Mukasey, Former US Attorney General (2007 – 2009):

Back in February when Egyptians were first beginning to stir, at Friday prayers in Tehran, the supreme leader Ali Khamenei, speaking not in Farsi but in Arabic to make sure that he reached and would be understood in Cairo. Prayers what he calls this explosion of sacred anger and warned against US interference in Egypt. He claimed that events in Tahrir square were a natural extension of the 1979 revolution in Iran. He was obviously not embarrassed that in 2009 he, himself, had given the orders to put down the uprising in

the streets of Tehran that actually began the Arab Spring...

This is a great opportunity to change the dynamic that has prevailed until now and to do it dramatically. Delisting MEK would have two immediate and positive effects. First, it will show the current regime that we mean business and that we are prepared to take all necessary steps to bring pressure on a regime, including by removing a designation that simply enables that regime to continue abusing MEK members and claiming that even the US thinks they deserve it.

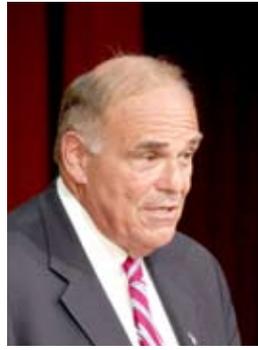


Günter Verheugen, European Commissioner (1999-2009) and former German Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs:

The first thing to do is to send a permanent monitoring mission to Camp Ashraf to make sure that nobody can attack the people there without being criminalized after that. So we need a monitoring. And I think it is now time for Europeans to tell the government of Iraq that this government cannot expect the European taxpayers to pay for the reconstruction of this country and get nothing in return.

I expect the European institutions and the Member States of the European Union to make it absolutely clear that the government in Bagdad cannot expect further support from the European Union as long as they threaten the people in Camp Ashraf. We want a binding commitment from the government in Bagdad that it stops once and forever.

There is also the problem of how to discuss it with USA. We have so prominent outstanding personalities from USA, who are on behalf of that allocations, I really wonder how many of such outstanding people who serve that country in such important offices, how many of such outstanding people in Ashraf, how many witnesses must still show up to testify that putting the MEK on the terrorist list was part of the political manoeuvre that went terribly wrong? I really must ask Hillary Clinton, Madame Secretary, how much time do you need to recognize that this was a fatal error and it must be corrected as soon as possible? I am deeply disappointed to why I could not see action against the American special envoy in Camp Ashraf last December.



Edward Rendell, Former Governor of Pennsylvania (2002 – 2011) and former Chairman of the Democratic Party (2000):

Well, we're here today to ask the State Department and the President to make that decision on two criteria. One, on the merits of the case. Not on a political deal. Not as a bargaining tool. You cannot appease a terrorist regime. Make this decision on the merits of the case. On no other factor.

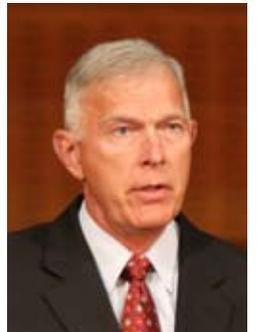
The evidence is overwhelming. If we decide this case on the merits, if we adhere to American justice and the ideals of the American justice system, if we don't use this as a bargaining tool or make a political deal, if we decide on the merits, the MEK should be de-listed. The United States and the UN should guarantee the security of the Ashraf residents. And as Mayor Giuliani said, the time is now. The clock is ticking. We don't know what could happen. Every day that we don't protect Ashraf, everyday that the MEK remains on the terrorist list is a potential danger.



John Bruton, Former Prime Minister of Ireland (1997–2004) and the Ambassador of European Union to the US (2004–2005):

Iraq is a sovereign country and Iraq does have the right to control over all of its territory as all sovereign states do. That's true. But it is important to recall that with every right goes a responding responsibility. And I think we have to say quite clearly to the Sovereign government of Iraq that it is failing and has failed lamentably to exercise properly the corresponding responsibilities to protect that go with the rights of sovereignty as far as the residents of Camp Ashraf are concerned. And

I believe the European Union which has given already one billion Euros towards reconstruction of Iraq. If further assistance is to be given to Iraq, I think that should be made conditional on insuring that the sovereign nation of Iraq exercises the sovereign responsibilities to protect the people of Camp Ashraf.



General James Conway, Commandant of US Marine Corps (2006 – 2010) and Commander of US Marine corps in Iraq

In 2008 I was the 34th commandant and we were charged with putting marines in the security role at Camp Ashraf. As a result of that when I had the opportunity to visit Iraq, I specifically went there. The events of April of this year changed a lot of things in my mind.

I would also offer to you that in a personal sense, a casualty of that day was the confidence that I have in the US country team.

I certainly endorse every aspect of what your Madam President has said. I think it is now becoming a responsibility of the UN at a minimum to put observers on the ground as soon as possible with a certain vow that leadership will be held responsible on the world stage for any further atrocities that may be committed.

I fear we do not have time. But I certainly advocate that a first best step is de-listing the MEK, providing for the people at Ashraf, and throwing our full support behind those people who are part of both organizations.



Eric Sottas, Former Secretary General of World Organization against Torture:

It became scary to see going forward the idea of the Iraqi authorities to evacuate Camp Ashraf, by the end of this year, and more disturbing to note that the U.S. Ambassador, who followed this issue, echoed this position, considering the European plan as illusory; this plan is providing protection, especially with the possibility, if necessary, to relocate Ashraf residents' outside of Iraq.

Therefore the mobilization of August seems to have been the element that has ended the deadlock. Recognition of the UNHCR [of the status of asylum seeker for Ashraf residents] is recognition of a humanitarian protection to prevent a massacre. For this process to take place, a protection should be provided throughout the period of the investigation that independent international experts should hold.



Louis Freeh, Director of FBI (1993 – 2001):

President Rajavi we applaud your leadership, we honor your programs, programs that have every single attribute of human rights, freedom rights, women rights and we pray for the day when you can go to Tehran and also come to Washington DC, please and see us there.

[I have] three very simple repeated but critical messages tonight: Delist the MEK immediately from the Foreign Terrorist Organization list.

This organization is not a terrorist organization. Number 2: Protect the men and women of Camp Ashraf immediately. And 3: Support, as Mayor

Giuliani said, support positively and affirmatively and aggressively the MEK and freedom fighters in Iran.

And let me just tell you something about not just Washington but any capital in any government in any country in the world, if there was one scintilla of evidence of credible fact that supported listing of the MEK as a terrorist organization, do you think for a minute, an Attorney General of the US, the Mayor of NY city, former ambassadors and governors would be up here?

The designation remaining as it is today, is a licence to kill, not only to the Iranian MOIS and IRGC and its agents but to the Iraqi government as was witnessed so brutally on April 8th of this year.

The United States of America has a duty to protect the men and women of Camp Ashraf.



Mitchell Reiss, Director of Strategy Development of the US State Department (2003 – 2005):

We need to continue explaining to the UN and US government why it is so very important for them to help resolve these issues before there is another humanitarian catastrophe. We need to keep up the pressure.

The residents of Camp Ashraf need international protection and they need it immediately. New communications equipment has been installed around the camps that will jam communications and thereby prevent the world from learning about what very well might be another round of atrocities like the ones we saw on April 8th.

There needs to be international monitors, preferably UN, placed in the camp to safeguard the residents. This needs to be done now.

As we all know, the US has a special responsibility to protect the residents of Camp Ashraf, Governor Rendell and Attorney General Mukasey have already spoken eloquently to that point. This responsibility does not end on December 31st, it does not end when the last American soldier leaves Iraq. It ends when all of the residents of camp Ashraf are safe and secure and when they are all allowed to live their lives in peace and in dignity. The fastest, the easiest, the best way to accomplish this goal is to delist the MEK.



Jean-Charles Rielle, Member of Swiss Parliament:

I know that a first step has been made to recognize the asylum seeker request. Today, for people of Ashraf to be protected, it is essential that UNHCR recognizes their status as refugees. And we are no longer in diplomatic times, we are in humanitarian times. There is no question that in Ashraf, they live again the experiences of a few months ago, when the Iraqis moved in the camp. It is extremely important today to send a clear message. We're really at a stone's throw from UNHCR and the authorities who can

decide to recognize the refugee status.

I wanted to tell you, Madam Rajavi, that you are at home. For a long time we wanted to see you in our city.



Nils Dedardel, Lawyer and Co-president of Swiss Committee in Defense of Ashraf :

Our Swiss Committee was founded in 2008.

At that time, there was great fear that with the transfer of Ashraf protection to the Iraqi forces, this protection becomes completely useless. Unfortunately, this fear materialized in practice, since you know that it is precisely the Iraqi forces, supported by Iranian murderers, who killed 47 people on two occasions in Camp Ashraf. However, the situation remains dramatic in Ashraf. The deadline, imposed by the Iraqi government by the end of the year, for the removal, the destruction of the camp still exists. The danger of a major massacre, again, is hovering over Ashraf, with consequences that could be much worse than what already happened.

We must continue to develop demands, mainly to the international community and international organizations here in Geneva.



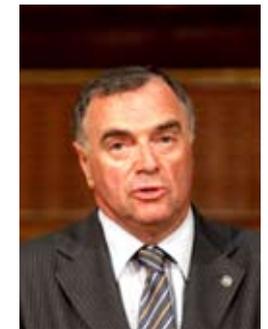
Luc Barthassat, Member of Swiss Parliament:

The people of Ashraf are now paying the price of freedom and democracy.

The United Nations must move and move a lot. It is unacceptable that Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights does not have actual move to protect the people of Ashraf.

It is shameful and unacceptable that the UN refers to the lack of personnel and budgetary considerations as an answer. If a new tragedy happens in Ashraf with bloodshed again, we will hold you accountable for it.

Mr. Secretary General, Madam High Commissioner, we require that your promises be honored and that you act away from any pressure that could come from some countries. Show the world that your role is to act also in favor of minorities and ethnic groups which are threatened, including the people of Ashraf.



Giorgio Bornacin, Member of Italian Senate:

My colleagues in Italy and I, believe that the United Nations should have acted much sooner on this issue. We do not understand the reason for their lack of action. It is said that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has difficulty for providing funds for the protection of a UN monitoring team in Ashraf. What steps this office has taken to solve this problem? Are they waiting for more people to get killed so they realize that they need to provide protection for the monitoring team and solve its budgetary needs?

On behalf of myself and my colleagues in Italy I promise you we will do all we can to deploy a U.N. monitoring team in Ashraf.



Matthew Offord, Member of British Parliament:

I stand here as a British Member of Parliament and a British Member of the Committee for a Free Iran, led by Lord Corbett, who many of you here know today, and whose hard work has ensured that the PMOI is no longer on the prescribed list of terrorist organizations within the EU.

As a first step, the Iraqi Government must allow the EU monitors and humanitarian rights observers to enter the camp and to monitor the situation in Camp Ashraf. They are the legitimate resistance of the Iranian people. They are the only hope for a free and democratic Iran.

And they're only crime has been to resist the tyrannical Iranian regime. I salute those people. I say that we here today stand with them as well. Additionally, we stand with the people of Iran in their struggle for a free and democratic homeland.



Remy Pagani, Member of Geneva Administrative Council, Mayor until 2011:

I went, for the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, to Srebrenica and to Rwanda. I saw what damage the non-intervention and non-solidarity of the international community had made, while these people and these combatants were entitled, according to the Geneva Conventions, to be protected. I went also to South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. I saw, again, the shortcomings of the international community.

I hope and wish - and the city of Geneva is on your side - that it will not happen again, that the international community will make the law to prevail, here in Geneva, the city which I am proud, and I do intend to take part in your fight.

Maryam Rajavi, The President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran

(Excerpts of her speech at the conference)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has declared that Ashraf residents are under international law asylum seekers and should benefit from essential protections.

Certainly this is a positive step but it is not enough and the UNHCR must continue in this issue.

Therefore, in order to prevent another massacre, the UN Secretary General should now declare Ashraf a non-military zone under the supervision of the United Nations. He should also order the stationing of UN observers in Ashraf.

At the same time the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights must begin an independent, transparent and comprehensive investigation into the attack of 8 April as soon as possible.

These are vital measures because the Iraqi government insists on its ultimatum to close Ashraf until the end of 2011, every day.

The issue of Ashraf is at the center of a greater crisis, namely the Iranian crisis.

This issue reflects the resistance of the Iranian people for freedom on one hand, and reveals the precarious situation of the Iranian regime on the other.

The clerical regime is encircled by a four dimensional crisis:

First, Iranian society is deeply dissatisfied. We all witnessed the uprisings Orumieh and Tabriz (northwest Iran) three weeks ago despite extensive repression.

Second, the revolutions in the region have increased the danger of an uprising in Iran. They have also accelerated the disintegration of the Iranian regime's regional alliances.

Third, the economic collapse of the regime has

hiked the inflation rate to 20%, unemployment is 17%, economic growth is close to zero, and the country's industrial base operates at only 30% of capacity.

Fourth is the internal crisis within the leadership of the regime, particularly the confrontation between Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, which is described by the ruling mullahs as the worst schism within the regime since its rise to power.

Now the key question is why the mullahs have still not fallen with all these crises around them? Why, despite the Arab spring, uprisings have not restarted in Iran? Particularly since the events of 2009 and 2011 put away the illusion of popular support for the mullahs.

The Iranian people have made enormous sacrifices in their fight against dictatorship. The end result of these sacrifices has been an organized movement with a democratic platform.

Still we must ask: why do the mullahs survive?

The first reason is that the repression practiced by this regime is incomparable to that of any modern dictatorship. This regime has organized 70 suppressive security agencies. In reality, the entire regime is a machine for suppression of the people.

The second reason has been the assistance of Western governments. If Western governments had not helped the mullahs this regime could not have survived. Because Western governments have on one hand blocked the path of the Iranian resistance movement with the terror list, and they have given a free hand to the regime and its allies in Iraq to act against the residents of Ashraf on the other. And at the same time they watch the wave of repression and executions in Iran in silence. They are practically active participants in the suppression



of the Iranian people.

The Iranian people need an organized movement in the face of the brutal oppression meted out by the religious fascist regime to obtain its freedom. You remember the uprising of 2009 in Iran. Some say that the United States was neutral at the time.

Unfortunately this was not the case. Simultaneous with the uprisings in Iran, the United States transferred the protection of Ashraf in Iraq to a government loyal to Khamenei.

It was a huge gift to the mullahs. Without this transfer, Khamenei could not have attacked Ashraf in 2009 and the course of uprisings in Iran would have been quite different.

The removal of the PMOI from the U.S. State Department's FTO list and ensuring the protection of Ashraf residents until final resolution of their status, are the most objective criterion to demonstrate where the United States stands in this struggle.



Groups of Iranian artists also performed live traditional Persian music which was warmly received by the audience.