

AI Index: PRE 01/195/2011  
08 April 2011

## **Iraq: Investigate deadly violence at Camp Ashraf**

The Iraqi authorities must immediately launch an independent investigation into reports that Iraqi troops killed and injured residents of a camp for Iranian exiles north of Baghdad in an unprovoked attack, Amnesty International said today.

“Iraqi troops moved into the camp this morning and used excessive force against residents who tried to resist them, according to the information we have received,” said Malcolm Smart, Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“This is the latest of a series of violent actions that the Iraqi government has taken against the Camp Ashraf residents, whose continuing presence in Iraq they oppose.”

Clashes broke out this morning after Iraqi security forces took up positions in the camp using armoured personnel carriers and, apparently, live fire against residents who tried to resist them, resulting in multiple deaths and injuries. As yet, the number of casualties cannot be independently verified.

The camp in Diyala province around 60 km north of Baghdad is home to some 3,400 Iranian exiles and refugees, including members and supporters of the banned Iranian opposition group the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI).

PMOI officials told Amnesty International that due to restrictions imposed by the Iraqi government, Camp Ashraf’s medical facility does not have adequate medicines or equipment with which to deal with those reported by the PMOI to have been injured in today’s clashes.

“If true, this is very worrying,” said Malcolm Smart. “Whether they like it or not, the Iraqi authorities are responsible for the security and well-being of Camp Ashraf’s residents and this includes providing access to adequate and immediate medical treatment when needed.”

Video clips of the clashes that the PMOI has uploaded to YouTube appear to show Iraqi soldiers firing indiscriminately into the crowds and using vehicles to try and run others down.

An Iraqi government spokesman said Camp Ashraf residents threw rocks at security forces in what he termed a "riot." Troops did not open fire, he said, but force was used to push residents back inside the camp.

Since the US ceded control of Camp Ashraf to Iraqi security forces in mid-2009, the PMOI has told Amnesty International that the constant military presence has made it difficult to access medical treatment inside and outside the camp.

An Iraqi security committee controls the influx of medical supplies into the camp and decides who can travel outside the camp for specialist treatment.

In July 2009 the Iraqi government stated that it had set up an investigation into the killing of six Iranian exiles during an Iraqi security force raid on the Camp Ashraf. The findings of this investigation have yet to be made public and no members of the security forces are known to have been held to account for the killings.