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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the decision by Albania to offer resettlement to 210 former residents of Camp Ashraf

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

"I welcome the decision by the Government of Albania to resettle 210 former residents of Camp Ashraf, now temporarily located in Camp Hurriya. I have followed this issue very closely, lending my full support to the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, and in particular the Secretary General's Special Representative Martin Kobler, towards a peaceful and durable solution to this humanitarian issue. Permanent resettlement outside Iraq is the only such solution. The attacks of 9 February on Camp Hurriya have reminded us that all efforts must now be made to ensure that the process of resettlement to third countries moves forward without delay.

I therefore call on the MEK leadership and the residents to respond positively to the offer made by the Government of Albania and to cooperate constructively with the United Nations, including by resuming the interviews with the UNHCR. I understand that this does not represent a complete answer to the problem the residents are facing, but I am convinced that this is a first step in the right direction, which deserves everybody's support. I also recall the responsibility of the Government of Iraq to ensure the safety and security of residents of both Camp Ashraf and Camp Hurriya, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 25 December 2011 with the United Nations."

P R E S S

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