



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Update No. 3

Camp New Iraq (formerly Camp Ashraf) residents and the determination of their refugee status claims*

- On 18 February 2012, the first group of nearly 400 residents were transferred peacefully by the Government of Iraq to Camp Hurriya (Liberty). Monitoring of the movement was carried out by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). Subsequent transfers have also been completed, including two groups of approximately 400 persons. Further transfers are expected to be carried out in the coming weeks.
- On 19 February 2012, UNHCR commenced the adjudication process of the transferred residents and the process is ongoing. UNHCR has mobilized teams on the ground, and has put in place the necessary software and hardware support capabilities. Individual interviews are taking place in a safe, neutral and confidential location. Decisions on refugee status and referrals to resettlement countries are being made.
- The stipulation of the Government of Iraq remains that these processes take place outside Camp New Iraq (formerly Camp Ashraf). UNHCR attaches utmost importance to peaceful solutions being found, including that any relocation outside Camp New Iraq proceed on a voluntary basis, with freedom of movement the most desirable state at the site of relocation.

Background

- Camp residents who have submitted requests for refugee status are formally asylum-seekers under international law whose claims require adjudication. In the absence of a national system of adjudication in Iraq, UNHCR is considering these requests on an individual basis in a fair and efficient procedure. Each individual case will be judged on its merits and in accordance with international law.
- International law requires that asylum-seekers must be able to benefit from basic protection of their security and well-being. This includes protection against any expulsion or return to the frontiers of territories where their lives or freedom would be threatened (the *non-refoulement* principle).
- UNHCR, together with the Government of Iraq, UNAMI and other concerned actors, remains committed to finding solutions to this long-standing problem, including readmission of persons with links to third countries, resettlement and/or relocation to third countries.

UNHCR
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* This document will be updated as needed.