

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Lama Fakih, *Deputy Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Ahmed Benchemsi, *Advocacy and Communications
Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Asli Bali, *Co-Chair*
Kathleen Peratis, *Co-Chair*
Bruce Rabb, *Vice-Chair*
Gary G. Sick, *Vice-Chair*
Fouad Abdelmoumni
Gamal M. Abouali
Yasser Akkaoui
Hala Al-Dossari
Salah Al-Hejailan
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
David Bernstein
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Amr Hamzawy
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlaf
Marc Lynch
Ahmed Mansoor
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Charles Shamas
Sussan Tahmasebi
Christophe Tanghe

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director,
Development and Global Initiatives*
Nicholas Dawes, *Deputy Executive Director,
Communications*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration
Director*
Babatunde Olujobi, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*
Tom Porteous, *Deputy Program Director*
James Ross, *Legal and Policy Director*
Joe Saunders, *Deputy Program Director*
Frances Sinha, *Human Resources Director*

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

www.hrw.org

October 24, 2019

Dr. Dindar Zebari
KRG Coordinator for International Advocacy
Kurdistan Regional Government

Re: Possible Movement Restrictions Imposed on Refugees In Makhmur Camp

Dear Dr. Zebari,

According to refugees living in Makhmur Camp, the Kurdistan Regional Government, following unknown assailants' [killing](#) of a Turkish diplomat on July 17, 2019 imposed movement restrictions on camp residents, seemingly because of [perceived PKK support](#) among camp residents.

Four refugees told Human Rights Watch that since the incident of the killing, KRG authorities at the checkpoint they have to pass through to travel from the camp to Erbil and onwards to other cities in the Kurdistan Region have been turning them back, saying they are not allowed to enter Erbil.

The refugees said that some do not have valid identity cards because the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad stopped reissuing the cards in 2014 and only slowly restarted as of 2018. As a result, those interviewed said, they also cannot travel through Baghdad-controlled territory because of the risk of arrest for traveling without valid civil documentation. Others said they feared transiting through Baghdad-controlled areas because of general fears of risk of arrest and lack of Arabic language skills.

The refugees said the restrictions have meant over 1000 of the refugees at the camp who used to work and study in Erbil or other cities in the Kurdistan Region have lost their jobs, access to education, and healthcare in Erbil as a result of the restrictions, leading in at least two cases to women having miscarriages because checkpoint authorities prevented them from entering Erbil to seek urgent medical attention.

In order to better understand the Kurdistan Regional Government's current movement rules for the refugee residents of Makhmur camp, would you please detail:

- What were the rules governing the movement rights of refugees in Makhmur camp prior to July 2019;
- What the current rules are;
- Why the rules have changed, if they have changed;
- Under what legal basis the rules were changed, if they changed;
- What process camp residents must go through in order to enter Erbil.

We look forward to your response to our questions by October 31. Please direct your response and any questions to my colleague, Senior Iraq Researcher Belkis Wille, via email or phone at XX.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Leah Whitson', is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa
Human Rights Watch