



Embassy of the United States of America

The Ambassador

Baghdad, Iraq

July 13, 2009

Mr. Mark Bromley
Council Chair
The Council for Global Equality
1220 L Street, NW, Suite 100-450
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Bromley:

Thank you for your June 4 letter regarding reports of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Iraqi citizens. We have received information on this disturbing subject from our contacts here in Iraq. This is a human rights issue that the State Department, my staff, and I take extremely seriously. We are committed to combating violence targeting all minority and at-risk groups in Iraq, including LGBT individuals. To this end, we are working with our Government of Iraq interlocutors, Council of Representatives members, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and our diplomatic partners.

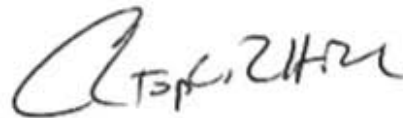
The attacks perpetrated by private militias against LGBT individuals are appalling. We have requested that the Ministry of Interior investigate any and all allegations that Iraqi security forces were in any way involved in these attacks. Embassy officials have raised our concerns with Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government officials and encouraged them to take acts of violence against members of the LGBT community seriously, and to protect vulnerable individuals. Embassy officials have also met with some of the men targeted by the militias; we are working with various NGOs and international organizations to find an appropriate resolution to their situation.

I would like to personally thank you for your participation in the May 5 roundtable discussion hosted by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. We are incorporating several of the recommendations

that were made during these discussions into our engagement strategy, including: encouraging the Ministry of Interior to actively prosecute any instances of violence against LGBT Iraqis and thoroughly investigate allegations of Iraqi Police involvement in the attacks; working through our Regional Reconstruction Team in Erbil to ask for Kurdistan Regional Government assistance in protecting individuals who have fled to Kurdistan; liaising with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to facilitate the resettlement of at-risk individuals to third countries; and requesting assistance and intervention on the part of the Ministry of Human Rights.

Thank you for raising the issue of violence against the LGBT community in Iraq. We would welcome additional constructive recommendations from you as we strive to put an end to these attacks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHRISTOPHER HILL", written in a cursive style.

Christopher R. Hill