



The Council for Global Equality

Advancing an American Foreign Policy
Inclusive of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

PRESS RELEASE

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www.GlobalEquality.org

Severe Human Rights Abuses against LGBT People Documented in State Department Report to Congress *Council for Global Equality Calls for Concerted US Human Rights Response*

Washington, DC – March 11, 2010 – The Council for Global Equality applauds this year’s State Department human rights report to Congress for underscoring the clear and growing crisis in human rights abuse directed against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people worldwide, and urges the use of diplomacy to counter this trend.

In introducing the report, Michael Posner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, singled out the case of Uganda, where introduction of a draconian anti-gay bill has resulted in serious abuse directed against Uganda’s LGBT community. The report further documents LGBT-related incidents in almost every country in the world, including a range of cases involving arbitrary arrest and detention, police abuse, rape, and murder. For instance, the report notes serious assaults against LGBT individuals in Jamaica, “including arbitrary detention, mob attacks, stabbings, harassment of homosexual patients by hospital and prison staff, and targeted shootings of such persons.” In Iraq, the report notes that “numerous press reports indicate that some victims were assaulted and murdered by having their anuses glued shut or their genitals cut off and stuffed down their throats until they suffocated.” The report highlights numerous instances in which police and other authorities have failed to investigate or prosecute such incidents.

Council Chair Mark Bromley, while recognizing that the State Department report examines a broad range of human rights concerns impacting various minority communities, nonetheless emphasized that “the level of reporting on LGBT abuses this year is remarkably detailed and truly commendable, and unfortunately this new level of detail shows just how dangerous it is for LGBT individuals to go about their daily lives as ordinary citizens in so many parts of the world.” For the first time ever, most of the reports have a dedicated section examining “societal abuses, discrimination, and acts of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.” Bromley insisted that “the report makes clear that LGBT rights are firmly rooted in basic human rights protections and that those protections are under severe attack in the world today.”

Senior Council adviser and former U.S. Ambassador Michael Guest applauded “President Obama’s and Secretary Clinton’s principled belief that the human rights of LGBT people cannot be separated from those of all of society.” Emphasizing that “many of the most egregious abuses have been committed in countries considered to be friends and allies of the United States,” he urged that the State Department develop strategies to counter intolerance and homophobia in every region, drawing on all the tools of American diplomacy.

Julie Dorf, another senior adviser to the Council, noted that “the Council has been working closely with the State Department over the past year to help move the Department’s human rights bureau from a traditional human rights reporting agenda to an active, human rights protection agenda.” Dorf explained that “in an ironic and unfortunate way, the intensity of the homophobia surrounding the ‘kill the gays’ bill in Uganda has helped raise awareness within the State Department, within Congress and within the international community more generally on the global impact of LGBT discrimination and abuse.”

Excerpts of the report’s findings on LGBT issues in every country can be found on the Council’s website at www.globalequality.org.

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