

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2009

Ambassador Christopher Hill
U.S. State Department
Embassy of the United States in Iraq
APO AE 09316
Baghdad, Iraq

Dear Ambassador Hill,

Congratulations on your confirmation as United States Ambassador to Iraq. Thank you for your service at such a crucial juncture for American diplomacy in the Middle East.

As you know, since the fall of Saddam Hussein, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Iraqi citizens have become more susceptible to discrimination and violence. However, over the last month, we became aware of alarming human rights violations that fundamentally threaten the safety of LGBT citizens of Iraq. Both in the United States and abroad, reports of the harassment, detention and execution of LGBT Iraqi by Iraqi law enforcement have reached a fever pitch.

The information we received was derived from two separate testimonials of gay and transgender Iraqi men that were detained, tortured and sentenced to death for being members of an allegedly forbidden organization in Iraq called Iraqi LGBT. One of these individuals was able to escape, while the other was reportedly executed by Iraqi Ministry of Interior Security Forces. Through conversations with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Heartland Alliance, it has become clear to us that these are not isolated reports, but instead, reports that accurately portray an aggressive campaign to locate, arrest and execute LGBT Iraqis in and around Baghdad.

As LGBT Americans and co-chairs of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, we are disturbed and shocked at allegations that Ministry of the Interior Security Forces may be involved in the mass persecution and execution of LGBT Iraqis. As has been stated by the State Department, we are aware that LGBT Iraqis are not being officially executed or being held on death row in Iraq for being LGBT. However, the persecution of Iraqis based on sexual orientation or gender identity is escalating and is unacceptable regardless of whether these policies are extrajudicial or state-sanctioned.

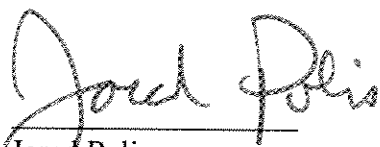
We hope that by reaching out to you and members of your staff, that the U.S. Embassy in Iraq will prioritize the investigation of these allegations, work with the Iraqi government to end the executions of LGBT Iraqis, and make protecting this vulnerable community a priority. It is crucial that the United States government take action to address this urgent humanitarian crisis and examine the evidence provided by international human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Heartland Alliance in Iraq. Given cultural sensitivity around these issues, it is also important that the U.S. Embassy work with human rights organizations to carefully ensure the safety of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Iraqis that may be afraid of reporting incidences to state

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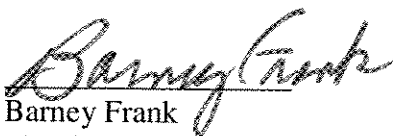
authorities, particularly when those instances involve state authorities.

Please know that we will continue to monitor this situation and hope to be of assistance in your investigation. We wish you well in all of your endeavors as the newly confirmed U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

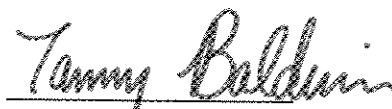
Sincerely,



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress