



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

October 18, 2016

His Excellency Haider al-Abadi
Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq
c/o The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
3221 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Prime Minister al-Abadi:

As the military operation to liberate Mosul progresses, I am writing to express my concerns with the depth of planning that must immediately and substantially improve to accommodate those civilians who will be displaced and the role of Shia militia forces in this fight and its aftermath.

I am pleased to hear that initial military advances have been swift, and my thoughts will continue to be with the brave forces seeking to eliminate ISIS's stronghold in the heart of Iraq. The U.S. stands with Iraqis in this fight, and I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress to ensure that your government has the support it needs. As we discussed this April in Baghdad, liberating Iraq's second-largest city from these brutal terrorists is critically important.

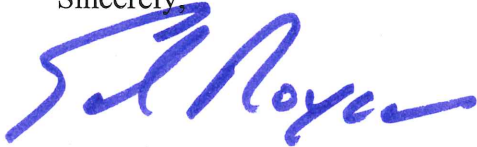
I remain, however, deeply concerned about the humanitarian preparations for the aftermath of the liberation of Mosul. As you know, it is estimated that between 1.2 and 1.5 million Iraqis – a majority of which are likely to be Sunnis – will be displaced in this campaign. Tensions could quickly flare as these refugees flee toward areas of Shia paramilitary control. Furthermore, camps and temporary structures to house, feed, and care for those displaced are in early construction stages – or not even begun. This effort must be dramatically escalated.

I am particularly concerned about the role of Shia paramilitary forces – many of them funded, armed and even directed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – in the operation to retake and hold Mosul. As you will recall, in the aftermath of the liberation of Fallujah, Iraqis under Shia paramilitary control suffered horrible abuses, including forced disappearances. Such mistreatment cannot be allowed to happen again. A repeat of these abuses following the operation would destroy the good will earned by Iraqi forces in the liberation of the city.

Mr. Prime Minister, this battle is critical in our collective effort to defeat ISIS. But we must ensure that short-term gains do not come at the expense of a lasting victory. Allowing Shia militias and their Iranian backers to take an outsized role in this operation could entrench them as a security and quasi-governmental alternative to the Iraqi state. We need only look to Lebanon and Hezbollah's actions to see how such forces can disrupt peace and security.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. Your leadership is critical to forging an inclusive Iraq.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Royce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman