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April 4, 2009

Patricia A. Butenis
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim
Department of State
U.S. Embassy in Iraq

Dear Ms. Butenis:

Over the past week, I have become aware of egregious human rights violations against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Iraqis being carried out by Iraqi government officials from the Ministry of the Interior called "Magaweer al-Dakhilya."

The information I 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 subsequently executed by Iraqi Ministry of Interior Security Forces.

While I do not know if these executions are being sanctioned at the highest levels of the Iraqi government, it is nonetheless disturbing that government officials and state-funded security forces are involved in the torturing and execution of LGBT Iraqis.

Even more disturbing was that the United States government appears to be largely unaware that the executions of gay and transgender Iraqis have been able to occur in Iraq given the enormous American presence. After reaching out to State Department officials in Washington, I was disappointed by their unwillingness to seriously consider these allegations and examine the evidence given to our office by international human rights watchdog organizations.

I urge you to use every channel at your disposal to properly and promptly investigate these grave human rights violations. Please know that I will continue to monitor this situation and hope to be of assistance in this investigation.

Yours Truly,

Jared Polis
Member of Congress