



حركة حراس المساواة Guardians of Equality Movement

Joint statement| Addressing Escalating Hate Attacks and Criminalization of the LGBTQIA+ Community in Iraq

In recent times, a distressing surge of hate attacks has been witnessed in the Middle Eastern region, particularly in Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan. Of grave concern is the intensifying wave of these attacks within Iraq, posing a dire threat to the tapestry of societies and the fundamental human rights within the region.

In a deeply concerning move, Iraqi authorities have implemented a sweeping ban on terms associated with gender and homosexuality. This ban encompasses a wide spectrum of entities, ranging from governmental bodies to non-governmental organizations and corporations. Such repressive actions flagrantly infringe upon the basic freedom of expression and undermine endeavors dedicated to fostering diversity and safeguarding the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

During a session of the Iraqi Parliament convened on August 15th, proposed amendments to the constitution were tabled for an initial reading. These proposed changes squarely target the LGBTQIA+ community and transgender individuals, paving the way for their criminalization, with penalties that could extend to the extreme of execution. These amendments stand in direct contradiction to the core tenets of human rights and serve to further entrench discrimination, violence, and incitement of hatred.

The undersigned organizations vehemently condemn these alarming developments and express profound disapproval towards the laws that have been enacted and the amendments proposed to Iraq's constitution. We urgently appeal to the Iraqi government and its institutions to reconsider these perilous decisions and to ensure robust protection for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community and all individuals, shielding them from the clutches of discrimination and physical harm.

In parallel, we beseech the international community to uphold its moral obligation to safeguard human rights across the region. This necessitates the meticulous enforcement of human rights statutes and relevant international commitments. A cohesive global stance is indispensable in addressing the widespread violations and unfounded prejudices that beleagu the LGBTQIA+ community in Iraq and its neighboring regions, consequently compromising the safety and well-being of the Iraqi populace and refugees alike.

The LGBTQIA+ community in Iraq finds itself confronting an impending crisis demanding immediate attention. Instances of assault and torture targeting its members have been distressingly documented, shedding light on the imminent perils they encounter. The time has indisputably come to extend robust support and unwavering protection to these vulnerable individuals.

Furthermore, we earnestly implore the United Nations and human rights organizations to stand resolute against the regressive shifts unfolding within the LGBTQIA+ community in Iraq. It is imperative for them to promptly address the dire repercussions of these proclamations, hate-driven rhetoric, and incitement. The LGBTQIA+ community in Iraq now stands in dire need of swift action, resettlement opportunities, and comprehensive safeguarding.

In the same breath, we call upon the United Nations and human rights organizations to address these critical shifts within Iraq and to extend the necessary support to the LGBTQIA+ community as they confront hate speech and incitement. The international community must proactively partake in maintaining the stability and security of the region on all fronts, including staunch opposition to the criminalization of homosexuality and the resolute fight against every manifestation of discrimination.

The Undersigned Organizations:

1. Guardians of Equality Movement (GEM)
2. Gala Iraq
3. HuMENA For Human Rights and Civic Engagement
4. LGBT Arabic
5. MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration & Capacity Development, (MOSIAC)
6. Yeksani
7. All Out
8. ILGA- Asia