



UK Lesbian & Gay  
Immigration Group

Registered Charity Number 1101400

(formerly Stonewall Immigration Group)  
140, Lower Marsh, London SE1 7AE

Liam Byrne MP,  
Minister of State,  
Home Office,  
2 Marsham Street,  
London, SW1P 4DF.

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Dear Minister,

IRAQI Lesbian & Gay asylum seekers – Urgent

UKLGIG would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to your new post. We have attached a copy of our submission last December to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into Immigration Control which summarises the current issues on which we need to develop constructive dialogue. This contains a background briefing on our organisation.

This letter, however, is to raise a specific and urgent concern.

We need to draw your attention to an apparent important omission from the Home Office's Operational Guidance Note (OGN) on Iraq which contains no reference to asylum claims from that country based on sexuality. The situation in Iraq for both gays and lesbians has deteriorated considerably since Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani issued a fatwa last year saying that gays and lesbians should not only be killed but killed in the most horrible way possible.

Although the fatwa against gays, but not lesbians, was subsequently withdrawn, we believe that this was due to political expediency rather than any change of heart on the part of Islamic fundamentalists. Indeed the evidence is that gays continue to be targeted, hunted down and murdered by Shia militias and men in police uniforms (see attached article from The Times, 17 May 2006).

In light of this we urge you to:

- 1) instruct the Home Office to include asylum claims on the grounds of sexuality in the OGN for Iraq.
- 2) ensure that no Iraqi lesbian or gay asylum seeker be removed from the UK whilst the current situation in Iraq persists.

We look forward to your early response.

Yours sincerely

Ian Morton, Chair  
UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group

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