

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 20, 2008

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the Iraq War and subsequent ethnic and sectarian conflict has caused the displacement of millions of Iraqis. While we have great concerns about the United States response to this humanitarian crisis, we write to you about a specific population of especially vulnerable Iraqis: those who have worked for our government and American organizations in Iraq and whose lives have been placed in grave danger because of that service.

Recent statistics and reports have indicated that the current system of identifying and resettling our Iraqi allies has structural complications and procedural inefficiencies. Since March 2003, the United States has admitted fewer than 8,000 Iraqi refugees in total. Your Administration's goal of admitting 12,000 Iraqi refugees during this fiscal year seems an unlikely goal, given that less than 6,000 have been resettled to date. At a recent Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission) briefing, one panelist, an attorney providing *pro bono* legal services to help resettle Iraqi refugees noted, "unresponsiveness and protracted delays in interviews and processing have themselves contributed to...individual emergencies...The cost in human lives and suffering due to institutional breakdowns in such aberrational instances speaks to the pressing need to ensure that our system is better equipped to respond to these challenges."

The role our own government has played in prolonging the suffering of our courageous Iraqi allies who risked their lives to assist our country is troubling and simply unacceptable. To better understand why the Administration continues to delay processing our Iraqi allies for resettlement, we respectfully request that you provide us with the necessary information in response to the following:

- While we are pleased that the United States has opened a processing center in Baghdad to assist Iraqis at risk in applying for resettlement to the United States, we remain concerned by reports that the office lacks the necessary personnel and resources at this time to quickly and efficiently process those Iraqis who are in imminent danger. It is most troubling that only Iraqis with sufficient connections to enter the Green Zone are able to receive help. What is the Administration's immediate and long-term strategy to improve and increase the efficiency of the current processing system?

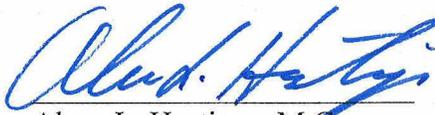
- At the Baghdad center, in particular, significant problems inhibit expeditious and efficient processing of our Iraqi allies. For example, logistical and security issues prevent access to the Green Zone for many applicants and contribute to complications with assisting applicants with medical conditions. In light of the inherent difficulties of in-country processing, what is the current status of a proposal by State Department officials to allow the Department of Defense to airlift Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants for expedited processing to a central processing center at the United States Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait?

As you know, this past April, England's Prime Minister Gordon Brown ordered an airlift of British-affiliated Iraqis to a military airfield in Oxfordshire, England in order to expeditiously and safely process them there. Denmark also evacuated and resettled 370 Iraqi interpreters and other Iraqis who worked for Danish troops prior to the Danish contingent's departure from Iraq last year. We strongly urge your consideration of a proposal similar to those that are now being successfully implemented by our Coalition partners.

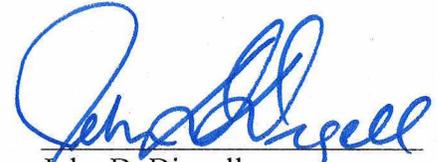
- The appointment of Ambassador James Foley at the State Department and Lori Scialabba at the Department of Homeland Security as senior coordinators within those agencies with respect to Iraqi refugee issues was an important and useful step. However, it appears as if there are still problems with respect to interagency cooperation. One particular problem that has been identified is that FBI background checks, even for those Iraqis who have been working directly with the United States military in Iraq, are subject to inordinately lengthy delays. To address this ongoing issue, we strongly urge you to appoint a Senior Coordinator for Iraqi Refugee Issues in the White House.
- When will the Department of Homeland Security issue its policy directive to implement the provisions of Sections 1241-1249 of Public Law 110-181, the "Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act," for which it is responsible?
- What is your Administration's policy regarding medical parole for those Iraqis whose cases are of high priority due to serious medical conditions?

Our government has a moral responsibility to provide aid and protection to those courageous Iraqi allies who have risked their lives and the lives of their families to assist American efforts to build a democratic and stable Iraq. We are deeply concerned that, to date, you have not acknowledged their sacrifice or effectively marshaled the assets of our government to help them. We urge you to speak out about the service of our brave Iraqi allies and direct the appropriate agencies in your Administration to take immediate steps to provide them with the attention and resources they desperately need and deserve. Each day, more Iraqi allies face increased danger or even murder for their service to the United States. To ensure that more do not suffer because they chose to help us, a prompt response to these concerns is appreciated and we believe appropriate.

Sincerely,

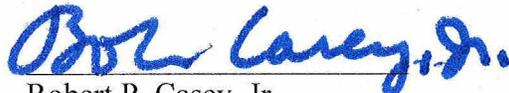
  
Alcee L. Hastings, M.C.  
Chairman, Commission on  
Security and Cooperation in Europe

  
Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S.S.  
Co-Chairman, Commission on  
Security and Cooperation in Europe

  
John D. Dingell  
Member of Congress

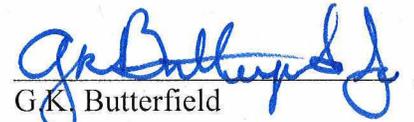
  
Russell D. Feingold  
United States Senator

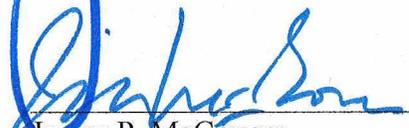
  
Hillary Rodham Clinton  
United States Senator

  
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

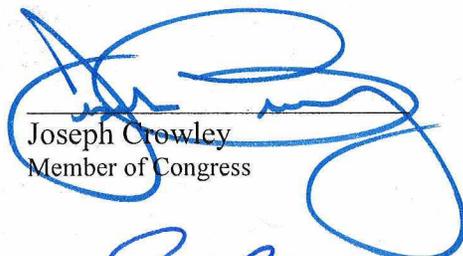
  
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G.K. Butterfield  
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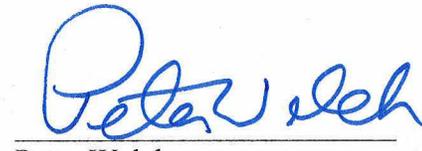
  
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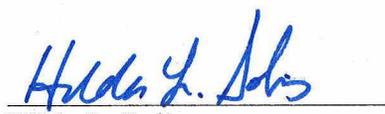
  
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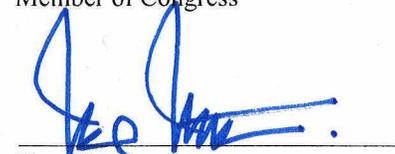
  
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