



The Honourable Peter G. McKay
Minister of Foreign Affairs Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C2

June 23, 2006

Dear Minister,

Canadian Unitarians are concerned about reported systematic killings and imprisonment of gay men and teens in Iraq and Iran. A report from the United Nations Office issued on April 10, 2006 confirmed that gay Iraqis have been targeted for kidnapping and murder because of their sexual orientation.

Our First Principle states our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. In 1978, the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) at its Annual Meeting adopted a resolution calling for all “codes of human rights to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.” This position was reaffirmed and expanded by the CUC’s Annual Conference and Meeting resolutions in 1984 and 2006. In June 2005, Canadian Unitarian youth carried a Pride Rainbow Banner to Parliament Hill to affirm and support the right to same-sex marriage.

In recent reports, more than forty five Iranian gays are known to have died. This includes the hanging of two teenage boys, aged 16 and 17 years, and the shooting of a fourteen year old boy. In one case, a young Iranian gay man with a good academic record had gained admittance to Canadian institutions of higher education. However, he was unable to obtain a visitor’s visa and study permit from his home government, even with an offer of free housing and tuition.

Canadians should not repeat the mistake that was made when Jews were turned away while fleeing the Holocaust, because they were feared as Germans. Like those Jewish Germans, gay Muslims must also flee to survive.

We urge that you instruct Canadian missions in Iran, Iraq and Egypt, known areas in which gay men are at risk, to expedite the issuance of visas in order to facilitate their arrival in Canada, a safe haven for gay men and teens. Unitarians and other sympathizers have





offered to seek housing for these endangered persons among our congregants, other accepting denominations, and Canada's gay population.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Vyda Ng
President
Canadian Unitarian Council / Conseil Unitarien du Canada

Cc: The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
The Honourable Keith Martin, Liberal Critic of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Wayne Marston, New Democratic Party Critic of Foreign Affairs
Ms. Francine Lalonde, Bloc Quebecois Affaires étrangères