

Coordination Framework Militias Pass New Anti-LGBTQ Legislation

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Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](#)

or see Part 1: [How to Use Militia Spotlight \(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight\)](#)

Although they avoided embarrassing Prime Minister Sudani during his recent Washington visit, they passed abhorrent new legislation as soon as he was back home.

On April 27, Iraq's parliament passed an amendment to the Anti-Prostitution Law that includes anti-LGBTQ provisions prohibiting "sexual deviation" and "changing a person's biological sex." These trends fit into the accelerating pattern of persecution since the Sudani government was installed by the Shia militia-led Coordination Framework (CF) in October 2022.

Although the parliament's decision was not purely a CF action, the lion's share of its support came from CF and *muqawama* (resistance) partners, while the measure was boycotted by most Kurdish and Sunni politicians. Importantly, the idea of amending the law—whose title distracts from its primary focus on outlawing LGBTQ communities—was championed by CF factions such as [the Badr Organization \(/node/17003\)](#), [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#) (AAH), and the U.S.-designated terrorist movement [Kataib Hezbollah \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah\)](#) via its parliamentary bloc the [Hoquq Movement \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-hoquq-movement\)](#). The new amendment calls for **punishing** [\(https://shafaq.com/ar/%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%80%D9%85%D8%B9/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%8A-%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%AB%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A\)](#) anyone who engages in homosexuality with a minimum jail sentence of ten years, and anyone who "promotes homosexuality" with a minimum sentence of seven years.



Figure 1: Raed al-Maliki complained to the Federal Supreme Court about Halbousi's efforts regarding the anti-prostitution law, October 15, 2023.

These CF factions were the first to introduce the idea of changing the Baath Party's 1988 Anti-Prostitution Law, which in past decades was used by Saddam Hussein's son Uday and his Fedayin Saddam militia to summarily **arrest and disappear women** [\(https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/nov/03/iraq.ewenmacaskill\)](#). On August 15, 2023, Hassan Salim, a member of

AAH's parliamentary bloc al-Sadiqoun, [submitted \(/node/18357\)](#) a proposal to add articles criminalizing homosexuality and a wide range of "misdemeanors," including cross-dressing. At the time, Speaker of Parliament Mohammed al-Halbousi blocked the amendment from moving forward.

In response, Raed al-Maliki, an "independent" member of parliament sponsored by the *muqawama*, brought a formal complaint to the Federal Supreme Court in October about Halbousi's efforts (Figure 1). A month later, the court ruled to remove Halbousi as speaker. And on January 10, it issued a ruling allowing the amendment to be voted on. The law was then brought to a vote by Acting Speaker Muhsin al-Mandalawi, [a CF-leaning "independent" \(/node/18601\)](#) who has used his new post to drive through various CF legal initiatives. Only strong lobbying by international players and Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's team stopped CF actors from undercutting the premier's [White House visit \(/node/18713\)](#) earlier this month. Yet the amendment was passed less than a week after he returned home.

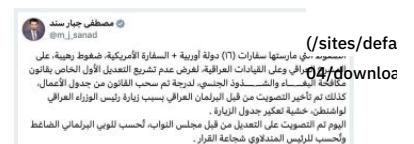


Figure 2: Mustafa Sanad celebrates the passage of the LGBTQ amendment, April 27, 2024.

CF politicians have rejoiced at the passage of this reprehensible new measure. Another "independent" CF parliamentarian—Mustafa Sanad, who leans toward Kataib Hezbollah's Hoquq bloc—put out the following statement: "The pressures that sixteen European states plus the U.S. embassy placed on Iraqi legislators and the Iraqi leadership were tremendous, to the extent that the first amendment for anti-prostitution and homosexuality did not get legislated and the law was pulled off the Iraqi parliamentary agenda. Also, voting on the law...was delayed because of the Iraqi prime minister's visit to Washington, fearing this could sabotage the visit. Today, the amendment was voted on by the parliament. Kudos to the pressuring parliamentary lobby, and kudos to Speaker Mandalawi for the bravery of the decision" (Figure 2).

Youssef al-Kilabi, yet another CF-leaning "independent," likewise credited Mandalawi for his "bravery" in passing the amendment, declaring that "despite all the pressure by ambassadors of foreign states" and the "acquiescence of some political



leaders," the parliament's "warriors and the acting speaker had the last word today" (Figure 3).

Similarly, AAH leader Oais al-Khazali issued a statement supporting the amendment and opposing international efforts to delay it: "We assure that legislating this law is exactly in accordance with the spirit and texts of the Iraqi constitution. We condemn the statements against it and consider them interference in Iraqi affairs and...targeting Iraqi society" (Figure 4).

Khazali has increasingly become the darling of many Western diplomats, but as Militia Spotlight [has previously noted \(/node/18357\)](#), he has a long track record of openly espousing detestable views on these issues. For instance, on July 1, 2023, he declared that LGBTQ rights were a "malicious American project that targets the values and traditions of our society, [thus] it has become necessary for all honorable members in the parliament to pass a law criminalizing homosexuality." ❖



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@Oais_alKhazali 2024/04/28

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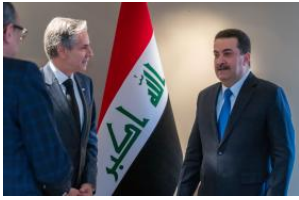
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