Dear Secretary-General Guterres,

I am writing to urge you to condemn the Houthis’ continued oppression and brutal murder of members of the LGBTQ+ community in Yemen. It has been a decade since the Houthis, an Iranian-backed terrorist organization whose mission is to further spread Tehran’s influence around the region, initiated the current civil war in Yemen. During that time, they have viciously tortured and executed LGBTQ+ people using barbaric methods, including stoning, crucifixion, and flogging.\(^1\) In addition, Houthi-controlled courts have sentenced LGBTQ+ citizens to jail and death for charges of “homosexuality, spreading immorality, and immoral acts.”\(^2\)

These appalling acts of depravity are not isolated, but part of a broader trend. Since Hamas’s October 7 terrorist attacks against Israel, an oasis for the LGBTQ+ community in the region, the Houthis have openly declared their unwavering support for Hamas and its barbaric acts against civilians. The Houthis continue to attack ships they believe are destined for Israel, utilizing ballistic missiles, drones, and even hijacking vessels using a helicopter.\(^3\) It is well past time for the United Nations to condemn the Houthis’ acts of hatred and terror.

The Houthis are actively torturing and executing members of the LGBTQ+ community simply because of who they love. As of February 8, 2024, the Houthis’ have detained fifty-eight people on charges of “homosexuality,” publicly flogged three people, and sentenced an additional

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2 Id.
thirteen people to death just based on suspected sexual orientation. The method by which they executed these individuals compounds the barbarity, killing seven people by stoning and two by crucifixion. These horrendous acts are comparable to tactics used by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

In contrast, in Israel, Arab parties serve in the Knesset, women serve at the highest levels of the military, and the country remains an oasis for LGBTQ+ people in a region hostile toward the community. Just a few weeks ago, Israel’s top court ruled that LGBTQ+ Palestinians who fear for their lives can request asylum in Israel.

The United Nations’ continued silence in the face of gruesome crucifixion, stoning, and flogging sends a disturbing signal that LGBTQ+ individuals can be persecuted without consequence. Your delay in condemning these horrific actions by the Houthis also endangers the lives of LGBTQ+ people elsewhere, as other terrorist organizations watch the Houthis act with impunity.

There is no place in our world for hate, persecution, and murder based solely on who someone loves. As the leader of the United Nations, I urge you to forcefully condemn these atrocities and protect the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals around the world, including in Yemen.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress

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Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

Anthony D’Esposito  
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress