

PWD Hearing Exhibit 1

Outline of PWD Outreach Efforts

The Philadelphia Water Department used Social Media, email and web announcements to publicize the public hearings including the following:

1. Home Page announcement

<https://water.phila.gov/drops/public-hearings-on-special-rate-proceeding-to-be-held-march-23/>

2. Social Media

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=281209530860976&set=pb.100069157931181.-2207520000..&type=3>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/PhillyH2O/status/1506659851186978821>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/p/Cbc7j_XuI21/

Nextdoor:

<https://nextdoor.com/city/feed/?post=221040402>

3. Email Bulletin

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/PAPHILAWATER/bulletins/30f4b4e>

Public Hearings - Newspaper Advertisements

1. Philadelphia Inquirer
2. The Legal Intelligencer

NEWS

Anti-LGBTQ+ law in Iraq drawing backlash

By **Abdulrahman Zeyad**
and **Qasim Abdul-Zahra**
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Human rights groups and diplomats criticized a law that was quietly passed by the Iraqi parliament over the weekend that would impose heavy prison sentences on gay and transgender people.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement that the law passed Saturday “threatens those most at risk in Iraqi society” and “can be used to hamper free speech and expression.” He warned that the legislation could drive away foreign investment.

“International business

coalitions have already indicated that such discrimination in Iraq will harm business and economic growth in the country,” the statement said.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron called the law “dangerous and worrying.”

Although homosexuality is taboo in largely conservative Iraqi society, and political leaders have periodically launched anti-LGBTQ+ campaigns, Iraq did not previously have a law that explicitly criminalized it.

The law passed Saturday with little notice as an amendment to the country’s existing anti-prostitution law. It imposes a sentence of 10 to 15 years for same-sex relations and a prison term of one to three years for people who undergo or

perform gender-transition surgeries and for “intentional practice of effeminacy.”

It also bans any organization that promotes “sexual deviancy,” imposing a sentence of at least seven years and a fine of no less than 10 million dinars (about \$7,600).

A previous draft version of the anti-prostitution law, which was ultimately not passed, would have allowed the death sentence to be imposed for same-sex relations.

Iraqi officials have defended the law as upholding societal values and portrayed criticisms of it as Western interference.

Mohsen Al-Mandalawi, the acting Iraqi parliamentary speaker, said in a statement that the vote was “a necessary step to protect the value structure of society” and to “protect

our children from calls for moral depravity and homosexuality.”

Rasha Younes, a senior researcher with the LGBT Rights Program at Human Rights Watch, said the law’s passage “rubber-stamps Iraq’s appalling record of rights violations against LGBT people and is a serious blow to fundamental human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and association, privacy, equality, and nondiscrimination.”

A report released by the organization in 2022 accused armed groups in Iraq of abducting, raping, torturing, and killing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people with impunity and the Iraqi government of failing to hold perpetrators accountable.

A group of Iraqi lawmakers said

Sunday that they had launched a campaign to expel U.S. Ambassador Alina Romanowski, accusing her of interfering in the country’s internal affairs after she issued a statement condemning the legislation.

Iraqis interviewed Sunday expressed mixed views.

Baghdad resident Ahmed Mansour said he supports the legislation “because it follows the texts of the Quran and the Islamic religion by completely prohibiting this subject due to religious taboos.”

Hudhayfah Ali, another resident of Baghdad, said he is against it “because Iraq is a country of multiple sects and religions.”

“Iraq is a democratic country, so how can a law be passed against democracy and personal freedom?” he asked.

Drones

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Ukrainian troops are being made by regular people at home. The civilians do not handle any explosives, which are only attached after the drones are delivered to the front. One advantage to the crowdsourcing is that it is decentralized, with private homes less vulnerable to Russian missile attacks than a large-scale military factory.

Instead of complex assembly lines, volunteers are transforming their own spaces into makeshift drone workshops. Magdalyna calls her home office her “drone room.” A stack of FPVs sit next to other supplies she uses to build the drones, including a soldering iron, copper wire, pliers, a screwdriver, acid, and zip ties soldiers use to attach their bombs.

A grass-roots group called SocialDrone is one of the local initiatives that has taught hundreds of volunteers how to make drones — sharing lists of components to be purchased online and written instructions of how to put them together. The group also published a detailed bird’s eye view YouTube video demonstrating the process, which has been viewed more than 400,000 times since November.

Once volunteers finish building their FPVs, they send them to the group, which vigorously tests the homemade drones before shipping them to the front. Drone-builders can request a device be sent to a specific soldier or unit, including their own friends or family, or they can let SocialDrone choose a brigade in need.

“A DIY FPV drone for 250 euros can do the job of a 1 shot Javelin for 70,000 euros,” the group’s website states.

Oleksii Asanov, an IT worker who co-founded SocialDrone, never intended to get involved in drone making.

A volunteer since the first days of Russia’s 2022 invasion, Asanov also founded other projects to support soldiers at the front. One sends them drone launching systems and another trains soldiers as drone pilots in a 10-day intensive course.

After the first troops graduated from his school, they complained that they returned to the front with new skills but no drones. Given the intensity of fighting, troops often deploy on a mission with five or more FPVs, then use them as self-destructing weapons that fly into a target. This sort of one-time



Ivan Bilodid, 65, builds an FPV drone in his home in Moschun, Ukraine. Russian troops lived in his home during their occupation. Now he makes drones to send to the Ukrainian military. Alice Martins / Washington Post

use means new drones are in constant demand.

Asanov said that for Ukraine to stand a chance in the war, it must keep up with this demand. “It seems for me that this war will be ended with FPV drones,” he said.

He recruited several friends and last year launched a Telegram channel introducing the project. He shared a shopping list of items to buy — and most people purchase the parts from AliExpress, the Chinese online shopping platform. “There are a lot of people who want to help,” he recalled thinking. “Why can’t we just make clear instructions and give [them] to people?”

After the how-to guide was published, requests for where to send the finished drones started pouring in. First, they received five drones. The next week, seven. Then 13. By

February, they got 400 in a single week. They have now received about 5,000 drones and have tested and sent 4,500 to the front. Donations keep coming in — including one recently from a stranger who overheard Asanov speaking about his project to Post reporters in a cafe in Kyiv.

The group’s YouTube video is how Ivan Bilodid, 65, first learned of the project. A thermal energy engineer with a specialty in nuclear power installations, he studied physics in Moscow in the 1970s and, while watching the video, thought building an FPV looked like something he could figure out.

For Bilodid, it was also personal. He lives in Moschun, a suburb of Kyiv that turned into the front line when Russian troops advanced on Kyiv in February 2022. For days,

Bilodid sheltered in a neighbor’s basement with 27 people. Eventually, he fled — not knowing if he would ever return home.

After Russian troops retreated, he learned they had entered his house. Looters went through his belongings, stealing his laptop and his wife’s jewelry. His home was also badly damaged from shelling, costing him tens of thousands of dollars out of his own pocket so far on repairs.

That experience “certainly pushed me to help somehow,” he said.

Bilodid advertised his plans on social media, shared requests for help fundraising with friends and by March had sent 12 drones to the front line.

Yan, 13, also came across the YouTube video. He grew up playing with

Legos and other construction toys and thought building an FPV would not be so hard.

His parents helped him buy the parts, but prefer he does not work on building drones on school nights. So, on Saturdays and Sundays, he spends about five hours a day assembling them. He has worked on four drones so far and his school has promised to help him make more if he keeps it up.

“I’m angry with the enemy but I’m also happy,” he said. “I’m interested in what I’m doing, it’s a new hobby.”

Each weekend, dozens of volunteers test drones in parks and fields around Kyiv.

On a recent Saturday, Krylyo, 32, and Denys, 23, sorted through stacks of donated drones and tried flying them one at a time.

The two men are former soldiers who were wounded. Now they do quality control testing for SocialDrone, running the drones through complicated maneuvers to be sure the device won’t fall apart. They also attach water bottles filled with sand to simulate the weight of explosives, making sure each FPV sent to the front can be fitted with a weapon.

Between tests, they helped another volunteer, Anna, 33, practice flying. A product marketer working on a mobile app, Anna overheard one of SocialDrone’s co-founders talking about the project in a shared workspace in January and joined as a volunteer right away. Now, she spends so much time on drones that “it’s like another full-time job,” she said.

After testing, the group places each drone in one of three piles: excellent, decent and nonfunctional. Most arrive in good condition, they said, but the DIY process also means there are errors. Once the drones are cleared, they are shipped to the front line. Soldiers often send back photos thanking volunteers for the drones — and occasionally footage showing how they used them to eliminate Russian troops.

“I never thought there would be a moment when someone would die and I feel good about it,” Magdalyna said. But the war has changed her.

“I’m happy they die with my help,” she said of enemy Russian soldiers, “only because they will not kill us tomorrow.”

FY2024–2025 WATER RATES (TAP-R)

Public Input Hearing

Friday, May 10: 10 am



How to join:
phillyh2o.info/rates-calendar

Water customer assistance programs are helping more people than ever. New rates are needed to cover the costs.

