

Dear Secretary Blinken,

As you are well aware on March 13th 2022 Iran attacked our partner and ally, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) via a dozen ballistic missiles strikes into a residence in Erbil, Iraq. The attack struck near the U.S. Consulate, and was a wanton provocation and outrageous violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both the Republic of Iraq and the KRG. Nevertheless, the attack continues a long-established pattern of Iranian provocations and if unanswered will send a dangerous signal.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter through your prompt call to Prime Minister Masrour Barzani on March 13th. In the subsequent Press Release from your office, you emphasized the “U.S. commitment to work with the Iraqi government and others in the region to hold Iran accountable for its destabilizing behavior.” We agree with and support this commitment, and invite you to work with us to pursue it through two concrete measures, and one ongoing measure.

First, we call upon the Administration to enhance the Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) systems currently in place protecting the Kurds in the IKR. Current systems do not protect our Kurdish partners from the full spectrum of drone and missile capabilities in the Iranian arsenal. Sustaining the free, prosperous and unique civil society it has built for itself entails such a commitment.

Second, we encourage the United States to call for a United National Security Council session to condemn Iran’s attack on Erbil.

Last, we call on the administration to redouble efforts to address Iran’s malign activities in the regions actualized by its militias and proxies. Iranian militias are inherently destabilizing to the security and stability of Iraq.

During your confirmation hearing, you expressed support for a better deal to address Iran’s malign activity and a commitment to work with Congress. We strongly support that goal. We also believe it is critical that you remember the Kurds have been a staunch ally and partner in the war on terror and played a pivotal role in the fight against ISIS, and continue to do so to this day. Timely consideration of the March 13th attack on Erbil and our response is vital, as the attack was orchestrated at a crucial moment in the democratic process of the KRG – one in which they work to formulate a new, democratically elected, government.

We share the goal of ending Iran’s threats to the United States and our regional allies, and we are eager to work with you on this important foreign policy issue and look forward to consultations soon. Thank you for your service and dedication to the State Department and U.S. national interests.

This material is distributed by Arent Fox LLP on behalf of Kurdistan Regional Government. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.