



An International Women's Human Rights Organization  
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## **MADRE Partner Condemned to Death By Jihadist Group**

March 1, 2007

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On February 26, 2007, Houzan Mahmoud, the international representative of MADRE's sister organization, the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, received an e-mail signed by Ansar-al Islam, the notoriously brutal jihadist group based in Kurdistan/Iraq.

The death threat, delivered via e-mail, read, "**With the permission of Great God, we will kill you either in Iraq or in London by the middle of March, because you are campaigning against Islam. You should be sent to God for punishment.**" Houzan Mahmoud, who is currently based in London, is originally from Iraqi Kurdistan, where she recently led a campaign against the imposition of Islamic Sharia law in the proposed constitution.

Ms. Mahmoud, aged 34, is an outspoken Iraqi feminist, secularist, journalist, and human rights activist. She has resolved to persist in her work, despite being targeted by Ansar al-Islam. In a letter to MADRE on February 27, Ms. Mahmoud stated, "**I will continue doing what I am doing now, going around the world cultivating support for women in Iraq and Kurdistan as well as exposing the violence and gender apartheid that Islamists are imposing on millions of women in the region.**"

MADRE denounces the threats made by Islamists against Houzan Mahmoud, and condemns all attacks on human rights defenders and women's rights activists. MADRE notes that for more than two decades, its sister organizations around the world have been targeted with similar violence, from the death squads of El Salvador, to the *interahamwe* militias of Rwanda.

MADRE stands opposed to all those who utilize violence, intimidation, and mass killing in pursuit of reactionary political and social agendas and extends its strongest support to Houzan Mahmoud and all Iraqi women who are fighting for their human rights.