

Human Rights Council 40: Joint Statement Item 8

General Debate on LGBTI persons in Chechnya

This Joint Statement was delivered at the 40th Session of the Human Rights Council on behalf of over 30 countries during the discussion under Item 8, held on 18 March 2019.

The following countries supported this joint statement: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uruguay.

I am making this joint statement on behalf of more than 30 countries.

The 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action makes clear that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, and that every person is born equal and has the same rights. It also urges states to take increased action on a range of rights, including freedom from torture and arbitrary detention.

We wish to express our deep concern about recent reports concerning the renewed persecution of LGBTI persons in Chechnya, Russian Federation. These reports indicate that, in recent months, at least 40 LGBTI individuals have been detained, and that two individuals have died following torture.

Over the past two years, reports of human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya have repeatedly surfaced as an issue of significant international concern. Last year's report by the OSCE Moscow Mechanism Rapporteur found overwhelming evidence that such violations had occurred, with impunity for the perpetrators.

The Vienna Declaration expressed concern about impunity for human rights violations. Today, we call on the Russian authorities to take urgent action in response to these renewed reports of violations of the human rights of LGBTI persons in Chechnya.

All persons who remain in detention based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity must be released immediately.

There must also be a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged persecution, arrest and torture of LGBTI persons, and any deaths that have resulted. Those who have directed and carried out these acts must be held responsible.

All LGBTI individuals in Chechnya must be treated as equal members of society and benefit from equal protection of the law, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as well as with Russia's constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations.

Thank you Mr President.