



74th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
THIRD COMMITTEE

Item 70 Promotion and protection of human rights

Statement delivered on behalf of

LGBTI UN Core Group by

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(Courtesy translation. Check against delivery)



### 3C General Debate on item 72 (Promotion and Protection of Human Rights)

#### Statement by the UN LGBTI Core Group

October 2019

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Chairperson,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the LGBTI Core Group.

The LGBTI Core Group is an informal cross regional group established in 2008. The group is co-chaired by Argentina and The Netherlands, and includes Albania, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, the European Union, as well as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the non-governmental organizations Human Rights Watch and Outright Action International.

Chairperson,

Our overarching goal is to work within the United Nations framework to ensure universal respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals without distinction, regardless of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, including lesbian, gay bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Our particular focus is on protecting LGBTI persons from violence and discrimination.

Protecting LGBTI individuals from violence and discrimination does not require the creation of new or special rights. The legal obligations of States to uphold the human rights of all individuals, including LGBTI persons, without distinction of any kind are well established in international human rights law on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequently agreed international human rights treaties.



Similarly, States have a responsibility to ensure the protection of those human rights defenders that stand up for the human rights of LGBTI-people.

We would like to thank the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for its continued support to this important cause. In a recent event organized by the LGBTI Core Group during the General Assembly High Level Week, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet stressed the importance of combating hate speech. As Ms. Bachelet put it “We need to fight strongly against LGBTI discrimination because it’s undermining people’s dignity, people’s possibilities, and people’s lives.”

The renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 41/18, has been a key achievement for the international community. The mandate was returned by the HRC with even more support than at its inception, demonstrating that Member States value the thoughtful and professional way the Independent Expert has carried out his work, and agree that discrimination and violence against individuals based on sexual orientation and gender identity is an issue that deserves continued attention.

We express our full support for the mandate of the Independent Expert and congratulate him on the presentation of his third report to this Committee. This recent report shows how discriminatory laws and sociocultural norms continue to marginalize and exclude lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex persons from education, health care, housing, employment and occupation, and other sectors.

Chairperson,

Many people in the world– including in our own countries – suffer violence and discrimination because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation gender identity or sex characteristics. Among other disparities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are significantly more likely than the general population to be at risk for mental health concerns such as depression and suicide or to be targeted for violence and harassment.



Over the past 5 years, 9 countries have decriminalized homosexuality and some progress has been achieved to fight violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as the Independent Expert highlights in his latest report. However, there is still a lot to be done. For example: there are still 69 countries where consensual same sex behavior between adults is criminalized. We call on those 69 countries to repeal their law criminalizing same sex behavior.

The LGBTI UN Core Group firmly believes that an inclusive society enables every person, including LGBTI people, to enjoy protection from violence and discrimination as well as access to human rights. To achieve inclusive societies and effectively implement the 2030 Agenda cross cutting principle of Leaving No One Behind, progressive realization of social, cultural and economic rights is fundamental and we therefore welcome the recent Report of the Independent Expert.

As the Secretary General put it, "Hate speech is often used to dehumanize already marginalized groups and individuals, exacerbating discrimination and inciting violence. It is an attack on the very essence of Human Rights and affects to us all. Hatred against LGBTI community is perpetrated by people of all kinds, including religious and political leaders, and amplified through both traditional and social media. Too often there is no real protection. On the contrary; in many places LGBTI people face prosecution and punishment for their sexual orientation or gender identity".

We take this opportunity to express our support for and pay tribute to human rights defenders that work for the human rights of LGBTI-people and others engaged in combating violence on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or intersex status. Their work, often carried out at considerable personal risk, plays a critical role in reporting on human rights violations and abuses, providing support to victims, and sensitizing Governments and public opinion. Through their work, human rights defenders that work for the human rights of LGBTI-people contribute to States adopting concrete measures to recognize and support their role and ensure their protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



We are fully committed to tackling these violations and abuses – at the domestic, regional and global levels, including through concerted and constructive engagement at the United Nations. And as we seek support from all Member States to this cause, we would like to stress that standing against violence and discrimination is not and should never be a matter of controversy. It is just right and humane.

I thank you.