



ASIA PACIFIC
TRANSGENDER
NETWORK

56th Human Rights Council session

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ITEM 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

Statement by Asia Pacific Transgender Network

Delivered by Polo Keadze

Mr. President,

This statement is made on behalf of APTN and has been drafted in collaboration with **15 transgender and gender-diverse activists from the Global South and East.**

We appreciate the Independent Expert's comprehensive analysis of the various restrictions on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association of LGBTI people. The report rightly recognises that the instrumentalisation of LGBTI people by state and non-state actors promoting anti-gender narratives and policies has resulted in severe infringements of these rights.

We would like to highlight how the restrictions on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association specifically target transgender and gender-diverse people and impact our ability to live freely and advocate for our human rights.

The mere existence of trans and gender-diverse people is being criminalised in many parts of the world. In Russia, a drastic law was adopted in 2023 that bans both legal gender recognition and medical transition. A similar ban is now discussed in Georgia in the context of protection of so-called family values and minors. In Malaysia, crossdressing on stage was banned in 2023. In the Indonesian city of Bogor, being trans has been outlawed. These restrictions and bans fundamentally inhibit the ability of trans and gender-diverse people to express our gender identity. This goes to the heart of the right to freedom of expression, which necessarily encompasses the right to express one's identity. In other words, there can be no freedom to express opinions if one cannot express one's identity.

We would like to ask the Independent Expert: how will you support efforts to advance trans and gender-diverse people's freedom of expression, particularly freedom of gender expression?

Thank you.