



56th Human Rights Council session

20 June 2024, 15:00hr

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

Statement by International Lesbian and Gay Association

Mr President,

This statement has been drafted in collaboration with 15 transgender and gender-diverse activists from the Global South and East.

We celebrate the work done by the mandate during his visits to the United Kingdom, the United States, and Cambodia. We also commend his thematic report’s multifaceted understanding of the rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and their intersections with political, religious, and cultural practices, as well as the focus on the backlash against the rights of trans and gender-diverse people, including children.

We wish to highlight areas of grave concern that are relevant to these issues and deserve urgent attention from the mandate holder and other UN Special Procedures.

First, the rise of anti-gender forces and their alliance with both conservative or right-wing and supposedly progressive movements should be regarded as one of the greatest threats to LGBTI people’s rights today.

As the thematic and country reports touched upon, their impact on LGBTI people’s enjoyment of freedom of expression, association, and assembly is alarming. We acknowledge the references and sources provided by the Independent Expert on the consequences of anti-trans discourses and misinformation around legal recognition of gender identity in the UK; the plague of so-called anti-LGBT bills targeting comprehensive sexual and gender education, access of trans persons to sports and single-sex facilities, and gender-affirming care in the US; and the proliferation of laws and policies in several countries, such as Ghana, Russia, Belarus, Nigeria, and Uganda, restricting groups and civil society organisations from working on sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

We invite the Independent Expert to also look into how educational and public institutions, especially in countries from the Global South and countries with highly gendered languages like Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French, are prohibiting the use of inclusive language or people's lived names and pronouns. Moreover, knowledge production and access to information on SOGIESC issues in these regions are scarce and the gap generated by language barriers is still an issue that affects the freedom of expression of sexual and gender-diverse individuals.

The censorship of the artistic and cultural expression of LGBTI and gender-diverse people, such as drag artists, as well as the right to possess, consume, or "enjoy the arts" also merit attention.

Finally, we invite the Independent Expert to work with the Working Group on business and human rights on the corporate responsibility to respect and protect LGBTI people's rights to freedom of expression and association. The experts should also investigate the failure of internet governance, digital policies, and social media platforms to address online hate and disinformation, including the inability of AI to detect hate speech in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. On this aspect, we would like to ask the Mandate Holder, which good practices have you identified to prevent blackmailing, entrapment, and extortion of LGBTI individuals through online platforms?