



56th Human Rights Council session

20 June 2024, 1500

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

Statement by the Swedish Federation for LGBTQI Rights - RFSL

Delivered by Thomars Shamuyarira

Mr. President,

My name is Thomars Shamuyarira, I am a transgender man from Zimbabwe, I support LGBT refugees in South Africa, delivering this statement on behalf of **15 trans and gender-diverse activists from the Global South and East present here today.**

Freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association remain some of the most contested rights for LGBT people globally, which makes the present report crucial for our continued fight for equality.

The report highlights the disproportionate impact of restrictive policies on trans individuals within the LGBT community. However, it lacks the perspective of **unique challenges faced by trans migrants and refugees.** We are often excluded from legal recognition, gender-affirming care, and mental health support due to our undocumented status. This exclusion significantly limits our ability to participate in social and political life.

We commend the mandate for focusing on the digital sphere and describing how the online spaces have become a site of targeted oppression by diverse actors. We believe that more focus should be placed on the effects experienced by LGBT communities when progressive media and content creators, which often are the only providers of uncensored information on LGBT rights and lived experiences, are facing severe restrictions of their freedom of expression, exacerbated when operating under repressive laws such as foreign agent acts.

Finally we want to ask where you see the role of your mandate helping minimise the public antagonism that is used as a political tool.

I thank you,