



59th Human Rights Council session

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ITEM 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Statement by ILGA World

Delivered by Lily Dong Li Rosengard

Mr. President,

My name is Lily, and I am a non-binary queer advocate & activist. As our rights as LGBTI persons are being eroded worldwide, upholding the freedom of opinion and expression is imperative to our basic human rights. We welcome your recent report on the upsurge in political disinformation and hate speech, social media platform safety backsliding, and the weakening of the integrity of traditional news media. This all occurs because of and amidst the global rise of fascism, fundamentalisms, and anti-rights actors globally.

Your report highlights challenges LGBTI persons face regarding information manipulation, how harmful speech targets and deters electoral participation, how free speech is being weaponized by politicians to attack and silence minority or dissenting voices, and the prevalence of ‘censorship’ allegations when opposing hate speech, including in so-called ‘liberal democracies’. This ramps up during election season, dehumanizing minorities. In particular, trans, gender non-conforming and intersex folk, and sex workers, are used as scapegoats in so-called ‘culture wars’, which directly threaten not just our livelihoods, but our lives.

In consultation with LGBTI activists from the Philippines, we welcome the SR’s report and your attention to the harmful impact of red-tagging on our communities. This practice facilitates gender-based violence, including criminalization, surveillance, harassment, and in some cases, killings. LGBTI defenders and organizations are frequently and falsely labelled as CPP-NPA-NDF fronts by state actors, often without evidence. This has led to arbitrary arrests and baseless terrorism charges. We urge continued engagement with LGBTI communities and follow-up with the government.

We urge the Philippines to:

- 1) Adopt the report recommendations, particularly those calling for the abolition of the NTF-ELCAC.
- 2) Review and amend the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 to ensure its full alignment with international human rights norms and standards, including the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons to freedom of thought, expression, and peaceful association.

Thank you.