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UNITED NATIONS: UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RELEASES GROUNDBREAKING REPORT ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Amnesty International welcomes the first ever United Nations report on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity. The report documents widespread discrimination and violence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people worldwide, and calls on States to end human rights violations and abuses, in accordance with international human rights law.

The report is a historic recognition by the UN of the discrimination and violence faced by individuals around the world because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, and a validation of the efforts of LGBTI and sexual rights activists and their supporters around the world.

The report, by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is the product of a resolution that was led by South Africa and adopted at the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011. The resolution was supported by countries from all UN regions. The report is to be presented to the Human Rights Council at its next regular session in March 2012.

Navanethem Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has stated that countering discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity should not be a controversial issue. It is not a matter of creating new rights or extending human rights into new territory. It is a matter of insisting that all people are entitled to the same rights and to the equal protection of international human rights law.

The report calls on all governments to implement their commitments and obligations under international law by protecting the rights of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It highlights state responsibilities to protect individuals from violence, killings, torture and abuse, including at the hands of family and community-members.

The report also calls for the protection and recognition of the self-identified gender of transgender persons, the decriminalization of same-sex relations between consenting adults, and the granting of asylum to LGBTI individuals at risk. It further emphasizes the importance of freedom of expression and assembly, and non-discrimination in accessing employment, health care and education.

Amnesty International urges states to respond to this important report by taking urgent action to stop the human rights violations and abuses it highlights, which happen on a daily basis around the world.

Background:

The report (document number A/HRC/19/41) is available at:
www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/19session/reports.htm
or: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41_English.pdf

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