

UN renews crucial mandate for protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

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(Geneva, July 12, 2019) – In a defining vote, the United Nations Human Rights Council **adopted a resolution** to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert focusing on the protection against violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 27 in favor, with 7 voting against and 12 abstentions.

The campaign calling on the Council to renew the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on SOGI was supported by 1,312 non-governmental organizations from 174 States and territories.

“This is another historic victory, not only for communities of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, but for humanity as a whole”, said Paula Sebastiao of Arquivo de Identidade Angolano in Angola and Simran Shaikh, Asia coordinator of the Trans Respect v. Transphobia project, on behalf of **60 human rights groups worldwide**.

“Following the call from a record number of organizations from every region imaginable, the UN Human Rights Council has reaffirmed its commitment to combat discrimination and violence on grounds of SOGI, and has reminded all states of their obligations towards these communities.”

Created in 2016, the UN Independent Expert on SOGI has been supported by an ever-growing number of States from all regions of the world. The resolution to create and renew the mandate was presented by a Core Group of seven Latin American countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Uruguay.

*“The renewal of this mandate demonstrates how **United Nations States’ support for tackling violence and discrimination against people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities has grown tremendously**,”* said UN Trans Advocacy Week campaigners. *“The Independent Expert is crucial in bringing international attention to specific violations and challenges faced by trans and gender-diverse persons in all regions.”*

Although the renewal process had to overcome 10 hostile amendments, **the core of the resolution in affirming the universal nature of international human rights law stands firm.** *“The existence of a specific UN human rights mechanism looking at SOGI issues is crucial for our communities to be heard at the global level,”* added Ryan Silverio of ASEAN

SOGIE Caucus from the Philippines. ***“If the world is truly committed to leaving no one behind, it can’t shy away from addressing the violence and discrimination that we face. Laws criminalising our identities and actions are unjust, and should no longer be tolerated”.***

The UN Independent Expert on SOGI is tasked with assessing implementation of existing international human rights law, by talking to States, and working collaboratively with other UN and regional mechanisms to address violence and discrimination. Through the work of this mandate since 2016, the impact of criminalisation of same-sex relations and lack of legal gender recognition, the importance of data-collection specific to SOGI communities, and examples of good practices to prevent discrimination have been highlighted globally, with visits to Argentina, Georgia, Mozambique and Ukraine.

*“The renewal of the mandate signals that the brutal violence and inhuman degradation faced by LGBTI communities worldwide concerns the world community and is an important message **reaffirming the humanness of all persons regardless of SOGI**. This will help take our struggle forward,”* said Arvind Narrain, Director of Research and Practice or ARC International.

We hope that all governments cooperate fully with the UN Independent Expert on SOGI in this important work to bring about a world free from violence and discrimination for all people regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

** ENDS **

Note to editors:

1. The Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. The mandate was established in 2016 and has been held by Vitit Muntarbhorn (2016-2017) from Thailand, and Victor Madrigal-Borloz (2017-ongoing).
2. The press release refers to “people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities” or to “LGBT” – instead of “LGBTI” – as the mandate is specifically tasked with addressing human rights violations on sexual orientation and gender identity.

ORGANISATIONS SIGNING THE STATEMENT

42 Degrees

ABGLT – ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE LESBICAS, GAYS, BISSEXUAIS, TRAVESTIS, TRANSEXUAIS E INTERSEXOS

Accountability International

Amnesty International

ARC International

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN)

Asistencia Legal por los Derechos Humanos A.C. (ASILEGAL)

Asociación OTD Chile

Caribe Afirmativo

çavaria

CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality

COC Nederland

Colectivo Alejandria

Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA)

Conurbanes por la Diversidad- Argentina

Egale Canada

Equality Australia

ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey

Fundación Afrodescendiente por las Diversidades Sociales y Sexuales – SOMOS IDENTIDAD

Fundacion Arcoiris por el respeto a la diversidad sexual

Fundación Reflejos de Venezuela

GATE

Gender DynamiX

GIN-SSOGIE

Haus of Khameleon

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia

Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum

Human Rights Law Centre

ILGA Asia

ILGA World

ILGALAC – Asociación Internacional de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, Trans e Intersex para América Latina y El Caribe

International Family Equality Day

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

International Service for Human Rights

Iranti

Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights (KLPH)

Las Reinas Chulas Cabaret y Derechos Humanos AC

LGBTI Support Center

LSVD Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany

Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA)

ODRI Intersectional rights

OutRight Action International

Pacific Human Rights Initiative

People's Matrix

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy

Planet Ally

Red Latinoamericana GayLatino

REDTRANS Nicaragua

RFSL, the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights

RFSU

RWS – India's Diverse Chamber

Stichting NNID

Synergía – Initiatives for Human Rights

The International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights

the Transgender Liberation Front(abbr. TLF)

Trans Pasefika

TransAction (Aotearoa / New Zealand)

Valientes de Corazón Ecuador

Young Queer Alliance