



*Check against Delivery*

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UN Human Rights Council  
Twenty-Ninth Session  
15 June – 3 July 2015

Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

*General Debate*

Mr President,

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch welcome the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on “Discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.”<sup>1</sup> Our organisations commend the High Commissioner and his office for the OHCHR’s activities to combat discrimination and violence against individuals who are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex, as well as for the promotion of good practices from all regions of the world to address and prevent such violations and abuses.

We continue to document incidents of violence against LGBTI individuals, including incidents that are perpetrated with impunity, as well as cases of LGBTI individuals being evicted from their homes, fired from their employment, denied healthcare, and rejected by their families, simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In some cases, these abuses have been linked to existing or new restrictive legislation. We also continue to document cases of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of LGBTI individuals.

Our organisations remain concerned that:

- some 76 countries retain laws criminalising consensual sexual activity between adults of the same sex, and that these laws continue to be enforced;
- many transgender individuals are not able to obtain legal recognition of their gender, and even where procedures for legal gender recognition exist, they often include requirements which are themselves human rights violations
- laws explicitly targeting LGBTI people or human rights defenders are used to violate the rights of freedom of expression, assembly and association for LGBTI persons, or to curtail or prevent the activities of those working for the human rights of LGBTI persons – or even just providing information or support.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch commend the Human Rights Council for its attention to the specific human rights violations and abuses faced by individuals because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. We urge the Council to remain seized of this issue, including through acting on, and urging states to act on, the recommendations in the report presented today<sup>2</sup> and the 2011 report “Violence and discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.”<sup>3</sup>

The violations described in the OHCHR reports are systemic, and require systemic responses. The HRC should adopt a resolution to ensure regular reporting, constructive dialogue and sustained attention to the breadth of human rights violations and abuses on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Our organisations have submitted a written statement for this debate, which further details our concerns and recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/29/23, 4 May 2015

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/29/23

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/19/41

<sup>4</sup> “UN Human Rights Council: Time for sustained progress on human Rights, sexual orientation and gender identity”  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/1850/2015/en/>