

Oral Statement
International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)
24th Session of the Human Rights Council
UPR Bangladesh
Friday 20th September 2013

Delivered by: Tanvir Alim

Thank you Mr. President;

This statement is also on behalf of Boys of Bangladesh, the oldest and largest platform of self identified gay men in Bangladesh.

We thank the Government of Bangladesh for positively engaging with the UPR process and accepting many of the recommendations from other state parties. We appreciate that the government has recognized the existence of the LGBTI population in Bangladesh through its reply to USA during the UPR working group session.

However, we regret that the Government has rejected recommendation to abolish Section 377 which criminalizes consensual same-sex relationship. The government already has an extensive HIV/AIDS program including men who have sex with men (MSM) and Hijras. Hence, this rejection indicates that it's just to avoid acknowledging human rights violations of sexual and gender minorities.

We know that a law can't be changed overnight. But, at the same time, decriminalizing Section 377 is important because it can help bring social change.

Despite government accepting recommendation of UPR 2009 to train law enforcers in sexual orientation and gender identity, we are concerned about how Sanjida and Puja, a lesbian couple, has been treated recently.

We also ask the Government of Bangladesh to proactively stop intolerant groups from making inflammatory homophobic remarks, which have often resulted in violence towards LGBT community.

We call on the Government of Bangladesh to take concrete steps to implement the recommendations to protect all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We will be happy to share our expertise in this regard.

Thank you.