

**36<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council Session**  
**19<sup>th</sup> October 2017**  
**Item 4 – General Debate**  
**Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association**

*Delivered by Callum Birch*

Thank you, Mr. President,

This Council promises to address the human rights of all, and to fulfil this all voices must be heard here, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) ones. LGBTI persons are subject to severe human rights violations – discrimination and violence – in every region on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics (SOGIESC). This is often confounded by other factors, such as age, ethnicity or race, gender, HIV status or socio-economic status. Mr. President, we would like to draw attention to some alarming examples of such violations.

In **Indonesia**, the authorities have launched a crackdown, including home raids and forced evictions of lesbians.<sup>1</sup> The use of state-orchestrated discrimination and violence is a serious affront to human rights.

Similarly, in **Nigeria**, there is police harassment of LGBT persons. This can be through ‘outing’ people to their communities. Recently, the police arrested over fifty gay men on spurious charges.<sup>2</sup> When state actors resort to such violence, it aggravates and legitimizes what is often a vicious anti-LGBTI climate in society.

In **South Korea**, dozens of gay soldiers and officers have been subject to an anti-gay crackdown because of an outdated sodomy provision in the Military Criminal Code.<sup>3</sup>

In **Haiti**, a law has been passed prohibiting public support for *homosexuality*. This is a violation of the rights of freedom of assembly and expression. A growing trend across the world, it hinders the ability of anybody to raise awareness on vital issues and bring change in societal beliefs which contribute to the discrimination and violence LGBTI persons face in their lives.<sup>4</sup>

In the **United States**, a ban has been placed on transgender persons serving in the military and funding halted for any gender affirming treatments.<sup>5</sup> This serves to entrench the discrimination and structural barriers transgender persons face in accessing employment.

**Finland** has recently upheld its policy of requiring transgender persons to undergo sterilization in order to obtain legal recognition of their gender identity.<sup>6</sup> Such coercive practices are sadly common in many countries. This needless medicalization of transgender bodies abuses their autonomy, bodily integrity and self-determination.

From **Canada** to **Germany** to **Uruguay**, in almost all jurisdictions intersex persons, especially infants, children and adolescents continue to face unnecessary medical interventions carried out without their

---

<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘Indonesia: Stop Raids on Homes of ‘Suspected Lesbians’’ (5 September 2017). <<http://bit.ly/2f1K8eJ>>

<sup>2</sup> OutRight International, ‘Arrests in Nigeria and Why We Need to Support Groups on the Ground’ (7 August 2017). <<http://bit.ly/2feGYYi>>

<sup>3</sup> The Korea Herald, ‘Korean military court convicts soldier over gay sex’ (24 May 2017). <<http://bit.ly/2iCWHIt>>

<sup>4</sup> The Indian Express, ‘Haiti Senate votes to ban gay marriage’ (3 August 2017). <<http://bit.ly/2f5X7f1>>

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘Trump’s Attack on Transgender Troops Becomes US Policy’. (28 August 2017). <<http://bit.ly/2xquQfH>>

<sup>6</sup> Pink News, ‘Finnish government opts to keep law that requires trans people to be sterilised’. (25 August 2017) <<http://bit.ly/2xbN9kz>>

free and fully informed consent, practices of which are tantamount to torture.<sup>7</sup> The Committees Against Torture and on the Rights of the Child have recently condemned such acts. The best interests of the child should guide state policies and practices.

Mr. President, all persons have dignity and rights. We are all equal members of the human family. Let us end discrimination and violence in all forms.

I thank you, Mr. President.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 'Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons in the Americas' (2015). <<http://bit.ly/2gB0CQo>>; Amnesty International, 'First, Do No Harm: Ensuring the Rights of Children Born Intersex' (2017). <<http://bit.ly/2hA7ewE>>