



**Human Rights Council
February 28, 2019**

Clustered Interactive Dialogue: SR on human rights defenders and SR on torture

Statement by: International Lesbian and Gay Association

Delivered by: Gulzada Serzhan

Mr. President,

This statement is made in consultation with Amnesty International Ukraine, the Ukrainian Public Organisation "Insight", "GenderDoc-M" (Moldova), "Cattrachas" Lesbian Network (Honduras), and the Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network (6Rang).

We welcome the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders and appreciate particularly the numerous references to sexual orientation and gender identity. We are tortured, harassed, discriminated against, oppressed because of being women, because of our sexuality and gender identity, and because of our human rights work.

For example, ten days ago in **Iran** a gender equality activist, our colleague Rezvaneh Mohammadi, was been charged with the so-called "collusion against national security by normalizing same-sex relations." This is an unprecedented case, and Rezvaneh may be sentenced up to five-year of imprisonment. She was interrogated for 26 days at ward, and according to the available reports, denied procedural guarantees.

We are deeply concerned about Rezvaneh's situation, as well as the situation of hundreds of our colleagues, LGBTI women human rights defenders, in all parts of the world.

In **Honduras**, there has been an increase of fundamentalism and hate speech against LGBT persons and women human rights defenders in media. Within the LGBT movement, lesbian women continue to be further marginalized. There is no progress in the investigation and persecution in regard to the deaths of four women human rights defenders. According to local defenders, the Evangelical Confraternity of Honduras met with the Magistrates of the Constitutional Court in February this year to prevent a favorable ruling from being given to the LGBTI defenders' appeal.

In **Moldova**, LGBT women human rights defenders are struggling with fake news in the media which intentionally present them negatively. The local defenders welcome the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders' country report on Moldova, and welcome the recommendations to the Government.

In **Ukraine**, LGBTI defenders face the enormous level of oppression and violence by right-wing groups. In this context impunity is the norm, and the homo- and transphobic motives in violent acts have not been recognized. 11 such cases have been reported by Amnesty International Ukraine only for the year 2017-2018. Already after the country visit, several cases took place. For example, in November 2018 in Kyiv, the Trans Remembrance Day March was disrupted by the right-wing crowd. The police changed the venue right before the start of the event, and then forcedly pushed the participants of the March to a subway station stating that they cannot provide safety to them.

We are here to be ourselves, to be the voice of our communities, and to defend our human rights. And we need your support and solidarity.

Your Excellencies, in what concrete ways will you commit to working with our communities to establish accountability of Member States and ensure that LGBTI women human rights defenders are protected?

I thank you, Mr. President.