



43rd Human Rights Council Session
June 18, 2020
Item 10 – General Debate
Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association

Delivered by Gabriel Galil

Madam President,

The current public health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19, is a global emergency with far-reaching human rights consequences. Vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons, have been disproportionately affected by this pandemic. We welcome the recognition of these specific effects by the UN's **OHCHR**¹ and by the **Secretary General**².

We also welcome the statement signed by **96 human rights experts, including the UN IE SOGI, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Council of Europe** that highlights how COVID-19 and the measures taken must not exacerbate inequalities, discrimination and violence against LGBTI persons. The experts are urging states to ensure the continuity of the work of civil society and human rights defenders³.

Best practices to protect the right of persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics have also been noted in other contexts in the past months.

In the **United States of America**, in a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court declared that SOGI are protected grounds of discrimination under the Civil Rights Act⁴. **Costa Rica** became the first central American country to recognize same-sex marriages. **Germany's** parliament has passed a law banning so-called "conversion therapy" for young people nationwide⁵. Meanwhile, a federal court in **Malaysia** granted permission to hear a challenge to a Sharia law ban on sex "against the order of nature"⁷, and in **Zambia** a couple who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for consensual same-sex acts was released⁸.

We hope that governments and international institutions continue to engage in constructive dialogue and share their best practices in this arena to ensure that the momentum surrounding SOGIESC issues continues to grow.

¹ OHCHR, COVID19 and the Impact on LGBTI people. <<https://bit.ly/3bOvouj>>

² UN Secretary General. COVID-19 and Human Rights: we are all in this together. <<https://bit.ly/2zh7IRV>>

³ OHCHR. COVID-19: The suffering and resilience of LGBT persons must be visible and inform the actions of States. <<https://bit.ly/2XjFlok>>

⁴ The New York Times. Civil Rights Law Protects Gay and Transgender Workers, Supreme Court Rules. <<https://nyti.ms/2BbL8ee>>

⁵ Human Rights Watch. Costa Rica First in Central America to Legalize Same-Sex Marriage <<https://bit.ly/2UR3x77>>

⁶ BBC News. Germany passes law banning 'gay conversion therapy' for minors <<https://bbc.in/2Y8BAJZ>>

⁷ Bangkok Posts. Malaysian launches test case against Islamic gay sex law. <<https://bit.ly/2UR48EH>>

⁸ Mamba Online. Zambia Frees Gay Couple Jailes for 15 Years.<<https://bit.ly/37C4xB3>>



I thank you, Madam. President.