

Human Rights Council
7 July 2020

Item 3
Interactive Dialogue: SR on violence against women

Statement by: Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie Van Homoseksualitet –
COC Nederland

Co-sponsored by: International Lesbian and Gay Association

Delivered by: Alice Coffin

Madam President,

This statement was prepared in consultation with the Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community, as well as Bilitis Resource Center Foundation, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, GLAS Foundation and Single Step Foundation from Bulgaria, and Fundación Mujer y Mujer from Ecuador.

My identity lives at the intersection of violence experienced due to my gender, sexuality and work. I am a lesbian journalist from France. As my Russian colleague, lesbian and journalist Elena Dogadina said in an interview with the French Association of LGBTI Journalists: 'We don't know when... our publications shall be the pretend reason... we risk an arrest... we learn to live with it'. Every day that our identities exist – we must resist.

Therefore, we welcome the Special Rapporteur's specific references to lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex (LBTI) women journalists in her thematic report.

We commend her recommendations, in the report on **Bulgaria**, to include LBTI women into laws against domestic violence and discrimination.

In 2019, an LGBTI community center was attacked four times, and online hate messages increased. Bulgaria needs to combat anti-LGBTI hate crimes and hate speech, including by amending the Criminal Code, and to provide shelters and support to victims and homeless LGBTI youth.

Legal gender recognition procedure remains unclear, and gender identity and expression should be explicitly mentioned as protected grounds in law.

Bulgaria should ratify the Istanbul Convention, and counter the misinterpretation of 'gender' and 'gender-based violence' by the 'anti-gender' movement.

Finally, we welcome the Special Rapporteur's recommendations to **Ecuador**.

There is no official data on violence against LBTI women in Ecuador, and the state should adopt policies in favor of this community.

COVID-19 has worsened the situation of LBTI women. Facing multiple forms of violence, they did not have any support, and human rights funding has been cut under the pretext of the pandemic.

And indeed, measures against so-called 'conversion therapies' are urgently needed.

Thank you.