

46th Human Rights Council Session

Item 6 –UPR Outcome of Liberia

Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association and the International Service for Human Rights

Madam President,

This statement was made in consultation with the Transgender Network of Liberia and with LEGAL Association Liberia.

We welcome the 14 recommendations made to Liberia on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity made by several states¹ during the review. However, we regret that fact that the Government of Liberia noted all the recommendations regarding the human rights of LGBT persons.

In its response, the Government of Liberia mentioned that despite the fact it didn't accept the recommendations, "the Government has remained engaged with all relevant stakeholders on the protection of LGBT persons from discrimination"².

We note however, that no steps have been taken over the past years to achieve this and no action plans on this matter have been either developed or implemented.

The section 14.74 of Liberia's Penal Law, amended in 2008, still criminalizes consensual same-sex acts between adults. Criminalizing these conducts, even when laws are not enforced, exposes LGBT persons to discrimination, abuse, and human rights violations by turning them into criminals and tainting them in the public eye.

Furthermore, the LGBT community and persons living with HIV still face major obstacles to access basic services, particularly health services, including sexual and reproductive health. The current COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the situation, with these key populations lacking access to nutritional support and to medication.

Currently, there are two bills before the house of parliament seeking to increase the penalty for same-sex relations and explicitly prohibit same-sex marriage. Members of the LGBT community say the pending legislation has already exacerbated discrimination, harassment, and stigmatization, and that things could worsen should the Liberian legislature actually pass these laws.

We urge the government of Liberia to amend its legislative and institutional framework in order to decriminalize same-sex consensual acts between adults, to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to take further action to protect, promote and fulfill the human rights of LGBT persons in Liberia.

¹ We thank the governments of Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Timor-Leste for the recommendations made.

² A/HRC/46/6/Add.1

Thank you.