

30th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 6
UPR Liberia
Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association¹

delivered by Patricia Massaquoi

Thank you Mr. President,

This statement has been prepared in consultation with a wide group of civil society organizations working on the protection and promotion of human rights of sexual minorities in Liberia.

We welcome the number of recommendations on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity that several States made during this cycle. However, we regret the lack of support by the Liberian government to these recommendations.

Mr. President,

LGBTI persons in Liberia continue to be subject to different human rights abuses such as harassment, physical attacks, verbal abuse, mob violence, hate crimes, religious intolerance, negative media expression and family rejection. There are no deliberate efforts by the Liberian government to stop this dire situation or to increase access to justice to LGBT persons who have been victims of these injustices.

The Constitution and the Liberian legislation do not recognize the protection of its citizens on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Penal Code criminalizes "voluntary sodomy" by same-sex couples with a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment. In addition, Liberia lacks proper legal provisions to combat hate crimes and incidents against LGBT persons.

Mr. President,

As consequence of the lack of legal and policy protections and a national strategy to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, LGBT persons, and other groups, face obstacles to access basic services, particularly health services at clinics and hospitals. Sexual and reproductive rights remain a challenge in Liberia, specially the dissemination of information to specific vulnerable groups such as sexual minorities, drug users, people living with HIV and sex workers. They remain stigmatized and discriminated.

Mr. President

We urge the Liberian government to amend and complete the legislative and institutional framework to comprehensively address discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Liberia has constitutional and institutional frameworks to support equality and promote human rights for everyone; this should also include the protection of LGBT persons.

Thank you Mr. President

¹ This statement has been prepared in consultation with the Liberia Initiative for the Promotion of Rights, Independence, Diversity, and Equality (LIPRIDE)