



54th Human Rights Council session

18 September 2023, 10:00hr

**Item 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Slavery**

**Statement by International Lesbian and Gay Association**

*Presented by Natasha Jimenez*

Mr President,

This statement has been prepared in consultation with Mulabi in Costa Rica.<sup>1</sup>

We welcome the Special Rapporteur's references to contemporary forms of slavery faced by LGBTI people in Costa Rica, in particular on issues related to sexual exploitation and risk factors for human trafficking, such as lack of access to formal employment, migration status and lack of housing. We also commend the LGBTI-inclusive recommendations to the Government of Costa Rica on how to ensure access to quality education, health and social care.

We highlight that people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, especially lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, continue to be exploited for sex trafficking in the country. For example, the recent rescue of six victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, some of them lesbians and bisexuals, in the "Bar Royal", in the province of Cartago. The victims were subjected to deception and threats and coerced into performing sexual acts in exchange for money.<sup>2</sup>

In Costa Rica, criminal networks have been strengthened by the change in the approach of state security forces after the Covid-19 pandemic, and by the reduction of social services and unemployment. All these factors prevent victims of trafficking and other contemporary forms of slavery from escaping these criminal networks and seeking protection.<sup>3</sup>

The government does not have adequate shelter options for LGBTI victims of trafficking, being accommodated by the authorities in hotels and on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>1</sup> Latin American space for sexualities and rights

<sup>2</sup> [Dominicanas, costarricenses y nicaragüenses de 25 a 45 años, las víctimas de explotación sexual en bar "Tencha"](#) en Cartago. El Observador. 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Costa Rica. (n.d.). United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/costa-rica/>

We encourage the Special Rapporteur to continue to assess the situation of persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of contemporary forms of slavery.

How will the Special Rapporteur continue to consult with local LGBTI groups on the implementation of these recommendations?

Thank you, Mr. President