

Mr. President,

This statement is drafted in consultation with Equality Bahamas.

We regret the fact that the Government of Bahamas has failed to accept key recommendations to protect the human rights of women, girls, LGBTQI+ people, and migrants.

The State still fails to address the issue of femicide, and address the fact that women and girls are killed because of their sex or gender.

The State has misrepresented the Protection Against Violence Act which, unexpectedly and without consultation, replaced the years-old draft Gender-Based Violence bill, void of the word “gender” and any reference to the disproportionate effect on women, girls, and LGBTQI+ people.

The State outright refuses to criminalize marital rape, protect migrant workers, decriminalize abortion, prohibit corporal punishment, and undertake constitutional reform for gender equality.

It purports that women’s participation in political and public life is equal, yet women are an embarrassing 18% of parliament.

The State failed to support even one of the 14 recommendations for LGBTQI+ people—evidence of its refusal to respond to the needs of LGBTQI+ people. It is further evidence of the need for explicit legislation and policy on non-discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality.

The State refuses to acknowledge that incidents occur, whether or not it is privy to them through reports by police who routinely dismiss LGBTQI+ people. Its “unawareness” is its only response to recommendations to protect human rights defenders, prohibit gender- and sexuality-based discrimination, and guarantee access to justice, education, healthcare, employment, and housing.

In its response, the Government of The Bahamas boldly says it will not affirm the humanity of LGBTQI+ people or enable full access to and enjoyment of human rights. The Bahamas is portrayed as a destination for everyone in the world to enjoy while we, women and LGBTQI+ people suffer state-sanctioned gender-based violence and human rights violations.