

31^h session of the Human Rights Council

Item 4 –Interactive Dialogue on the findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

Statement by the Allied Rainbow Communities International and Mantaqitna¹

Delivered by Arvind Narrain

Mr. President,

The Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has already demonstrated how extremist groups such as Daesh and the Jubhat al-Nusra systematically aim to eliminate the very existence of many diverse groups, including LGBTIQ persons. It is also important to emphasize that in addition to Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusra, many other parties are also involved in the structural discrimination and violence committed against LGBTIQ populations.

The atrocities committed by Daesh and al-Nusra or other factions must not divert our attention from the multiple discriminations Syrians experience in the countries where they seek refuge or apply for asylum. Many LGBTIQ persons constantly speak of, but cannot properly report, physical and verbal violence as well as more subtle forms of discrimination, be it at work, hospitals, police stations or other venues.

The cooperation of the countries where LGBTIQ populations seek asylum as well as the countries of resettlement is thus key to ensuring that the creation of “protection space for asylum-seekers and refugees” goes beyond the resettlement scheme into ensuring that they have access to full rights as guaranteed by international law.

We urge the UNHCR to understand the specificity of the violations that LGBTIQ persons face and to address them in a sensitive and timely manner and ensure that their rights are protected. We also urge all states to fulfill their obligations towards protecting Syrian LGBTIQ refugees in accordance with international law.

¹MantiQitna is a network of activists living in Arab societies within a region that is often referred to as “the Middle East and North Africa.” The name “MantiQitna” was chosen because it emphasizes the connectivity between its members, outside the confines of ethnic identities and arbitrary borders. MantiQitna’s vision is to be a platform for the support and development of activists, and the MantiQitna idea stems from the conviction that knowledge, skills, and information should be shared and disseminated through a bottomup approach. The network also believes that learning and real connection happens best in flexible, participant driven frameworks. Breaking with traditional methods of exchange such as conferences and trainings.