

37th Human Rights Council Session
March 14, 2018
Item 4 – General Debate
Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association

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Thank you Mr. President,

Human rights are what bind us all together, with all our differences. At the core of the human rights framework is the conviction that all human life is valuable. Societies based on exclusion are inevitably unjust, unfair, inefficient and simply wrong. Today we draw attention to those places where we see a falling short of these universal principles; movement in the wrong direction for the rights of lesbian, gay bisexual, trans and intersex people.

In **Azerbaijan**, police have conducted a violent campaign, arresting and torturing more than 80 men presumed to be gay or bisexual, as well as transgender women.¹ International human rights law and treaty obligations are clear: no one should be arrested for their actual or perceived SOGI.

In **Turkey**, a resolution by the Government of Ankara has called on its authorities to indefinitely ban events organized by LGBTI organisations.² These restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly, and association for LGBT people violate their human rights as enshrined in international treaties.

In **Paraguay**, the Ministry of Education and Sciences prohibited the dissemination and use of educational material referring to ‘gender theory and/or gender ideology’. This measure represents a setback for the rights of women, people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.³ All schools should be able to foster a culture of respect for differences. In **Argentina**, several draft legislations of the executive are being discussed – ley religiosa - and this includes the elimination of specialized *procuradurias* in gender violence against LGBTI people, institutional violence and crimes against humanity.⁴

In **Uganda**, police raided and forcibly closed the Queer Kampala International Film Festival with no formal legal basis.⁵ The raid is just the latest in a series of attacks on freedoms of expression, association and assembly for all Ugandans, including LGBT persons.

In **Indonesia**, LGBT persons have been under fire since 2016. Hateful rhetoric from government officials, attacks on LGBT human rights defenders, raids on lesbian-owned houses and private gay clubs, and arrests under a vague and discriminatory anti-pornography law. The police and public officials have arbitrarily arrested more than 300 LGBT people, and more recently have detained 12 trans women who were then stripped, beaten, and had their heads shaved.^{6,7} This is just the latest incident in which Indonesian police have openly collaborated with Islamists to unlawfully target LGBT-related spaces and people.

Mr. President,

1 Reuters, ‘U.N. condemns anti-gay crackdowns in Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia’. <<http://reut.rs/2FT6gqn>>

2 Hurriyet Daily News, ‘Turkish capital bans all LGBT screenings, exhibitions, events over ‘public sensitivities’. <<http://bit.ly/2A0IHZS>>

3 ABC Color, ‘Piden que se castigue difusión de ideología’. <<http://bit.ly/2iC3EmJ>>

4 Nuestras Voces, ‘Una Más’ <<http://bit.ly/2dO6y0g>>

5 Human Rights Watch, ‘Uganda: Police Raid Queer Kampala Film Festival’. <<http://bit.ly/2j9lkBW>>

6 Antara News, ‘Belasan waria salon di Aceh Utara terjaring operasi pekat LGBT’. <<http://bit.ly/2GsjSXC>>

7 *North Aceh Police Chief Untung Sangaji addressed a crowd that had gathered: ‘Our ulama [Muslim scholars] disagree with this disease. [This disease] is spreading, (...) It’s inhumane if Untung Sangaji is to tolerate these sissy garbage’,* he said according to a [youtube video](#).

Every State is responsible for protecting and promoting human rights. Each one must stand for basic decency and mutual understanding. The rights of LGBTI people matter. Their rights are your rights: fundamental human rights whose protection is in the interests of all of us. We stand ready to continue working with these and other States to see how there can be accountability for violations, and steps-taken for the better-enjoyment of human rights for all.