

44° Human Rights Council

Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Date TBC

Draft joint statement the human rights of LGBTI persons and the COVID-19

It's an honor to deliver this statement on behalf of ----- and my own country, Uruguay.

The current public health crisis caused by the global spread of the COVID-19 is also a human rights crisis and a global emergency with far-reaching implications for the enjoyment of all human rights.

As we have witnessed during other crises, the COVID-19 pandemic further perpetuates and exacerbates existing inequalities, placing persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations or belonging to vulnerable or marginalized groups at particular risk.

Indeed, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) persons are subjected to multiple and intersectional forms of violence and discrimination in their everyday life, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in health systems. Such patterns have unfortunately been reinforced during this pandemic, negatively affecting the enjoyment of their human rights. In addition, and as highlighted by the Independent Expert, we are concerned that around the world LGBTI persons are “disproportionately represented in the ranks of the poor, the homeless, and those without healthcare”, which not only reflects structural discrimination and inequalities, but also underlines how deeply LGBTI persons are being impacted by the pandemic.

In this context, we stress our concern that, in addition to the negative impact of the COVID-19 virus itself, there is growing evidence that some of the State responses regarding the access and delivery of healthcare, the enactment of states of emergency, the implementation of lockdown and “stay at home” measures, as well as the adoption of policies to mitigate the economic consequences of the pandemic, can have additional, disproportionate and discriminatory impacts on LGBTI persons

Therefore, we call on all States to urgently take into account the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTI persons and their specific needs and vulnerabilities when designing, implementing and evaluating national, regional and international policies and measures to combat the pandemic, while encouraging the participation and consultation of LGBTI communities.

In addition, we encourage States to guarantee the protection of human rights defenders working in this field, including by adopting measures to help to sustain and ensure the continuity of their work.

It is our common responsibility to ensure that this public health emergency doesn't exacerbate existing prejudices, barriers, violence and discrimination or is used to roll back existing standards, rights and guarantees to LGBTI persons.

We therefore encourage all States to learn from the lessons of the current crisis to ensure the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons, without discrimination of any kind, condemning and eradicating all forms of criminalization, as well as fostering social transformation, by combating the root causes of inequalities and promoting inclusive societies

Finally, we confirm our full support to the mandate of the Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Victor Madrigal Borloz, and we welcome his technical guidance and active work during the crisis.

Thank you.