
**UN Human Rights Council
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Item 8 – General Debate

Thank you, Madam President.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. This idea was reinforced with the Vienna Declaration and, more recently, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

However, members of the LGBTI community see their rights limited, and are victims of violence and discrimination. We cannot continue ignoring this reality.

Madam President,

Unfortunately, some States sitting in this Chamber seems to disregard this basic idea: we are all equal and we are all entitled to the same rights.

For example, last year, when asked about the execution in Iran of homosexuals based on their sexual orientation, Iran’s Foreign Minister, Mohammed Javad Sarif, replied that Iran’s society has moral principles, and that they live according to those principles that concern the behavior of people, and therefore, the law is respected and obeyed.

This can only makes us wonder... what are those principles? Discrimination, oppression and violence?

Instead of questioning the law, or recognizing a need to change, they easily turn to violence. That is why in Iran a gender equality activist can be prosecuted for “collusion against national security by normalising same sex relations”, or people can be sentenced to 100 lashes or even to death, if discovered when engaging in same sex relations.

Madam President,

We believe that if we want to really achieve a more just society, where “leaving no one behind” is more than just words, we need to start by addressing these issues, instead of ignoring them. It may be a long way, but then it is even more urgent to start walking the path of equality.

I thank you Mr. President.