



Supporting an enabling environment for LGBTI civil society

Side Event

13:00-15:00, 23 June 2015

29th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Concept Note

Despite laudable [steps](#) taken by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to establish a stronger normative framework safeguarding against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, LGBTI human rights defenders (HRDs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) continue to face a wide range of human rights violations to undermine their legitimate activities. In addition to legislative and extra-legal restrictions endured by HRDs across the world, HRDs advocating for the promotion and protection of LGBTI rights are increasingly being subjected to targeted persecution and harassment.

According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) same-sex relations remain criminalized in over 70 countries. Moreover, a number of governments have recently introduced regressive and discriminatory laws to silence the work of LGBTI civil society groups. In **Lithuania**, since 2014, at least five draft laws have been proposed criminalizing LGBTI right advocacy including LGBTI pride parades and the dissemination of gay rights campaign materials. In **Nigeria**, a new law adopted in January 2014 recommends prison sentences up to 10 years for persons who register, operate or participate in gay clubs, societies and organizations. In **India**, in late 2013, the Supreme Court reinstated colonial-era provisions of the penal code criminalizing same-sex relations.

However, while governments continue to impose unwarranted limitations on the activities of LGBTI activists and organizations, civil society groups are playing an instrumental role in creating and maintaining spaces for LGBTI HRDs to operate. As a result of the sustained advocacy efforts of civil society and other relevant stakeholders to create a safe and enabling environment for groups working on LGBTI issues, discriminatory laws have been repealed in dozens of countries while several other States from Moldova to Vietnam to Colombia have actively sought to combat violence and discrimination and facilitate the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly for LGBTI groups.

To discuss **“Supporting an enabling environment for LGBTI civil society,”** CIVICUS, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association



(ILGA) and the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) are organizing a joint side event on 23 June 2015, during the 29th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The event will provide an important opportunity to discuss effective strategies to create and sustain an enabling environment for LGBTI civil society groups and human rights defenders. The panel will also provide a vital ingress to identity approaches to building cross-border solidarity and effective civil society movements to address restrictions on the LGBTI community, including the implementation of recommendations identified by OHCHR in its forthcoming report on good practices to overcome violence and discrimination of individuals and groups based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Panelists:

Moderator:

For more information please contacts: