



**29th session of the
Human Rights Council**

Item 8

**General Debate
29 June 2015
Delivered by Dora Tuez**

Thank you, Mr President,

CIVICUS wishes to address the Council on the High Commissioner's report on discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

While CIVICUS welcomes the timely update of this report, we remain deeply concerned by the ongoing targeted persecution of LGBTI persons and activists. Efforts by a number of governments to introduce laws to reduce discrimination against LGBTI persons – including the US Supreme Court's milestone decision to legalize same sex marriage across all states - continue to be overshadowed by serious human rights violations against them.

The continuous rise of extremism and rightwing movements has led to an escalation of intimidation, persecution and attacks on LGBTI activists. LGBTI persons and defenders are routinely denied basic human rights in many countries and are subjected to social stigmatization.

In Zambia, for example, an openly gay man won't have access to healthcare, as doctors will refuse to treat him. Moreover, police prevent gay activists from openly participating in meetings and dialogues, thus undermining their rights to freedom of association and assembly. The violent interventions by the police during yesterday's gay pride parade in Istanbul are yet another example.

Recent developments in Russia remain deeply troubling. Judicial harassment of LGBTI persons and the continued invocation of anti-gay propaganda laws criminalizing public dissemination of LGBT issues to minors, represent a flagrant violation of the right to freedom of expression. The attendant number of LGBTI asylum seekers from Russia has substantially risen over the past three years.

We therefore share the concerns of the High Commissioner that the existing protection mechanisms are inadequate and urge states to take exigent measures to ensure the effective implementation of recommendations put forward in the High Commissioners report, especially when defenders of LGBTI rights are concerned.

CIVICUS thanks the High Commissioner for his continued engagement and support for this matter.

Thank you.