

Rights of People with Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sexual Characteristics (SOGIESC) UPR Pre-session on Solomon Islands Geneva, 10 Feb 2026

Delivered by Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Network

This statement is delivered by the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Network (GESI Network), a Solomon Islands-based civil society network working to advance gender equality, social inclusion, and the human rights of marginalized communities in the Solomon Islands.

This statement is delivered on behalf of a coalition with ILGA Oceania, Equality Australia, and Kaleidoscope Human Rights Foundation.

This statement is informed by a shadow report documenting the lived experiences of Solomon Islanders with diverse SOGIESC. The findings are based on confidential, trauma-informed consultations with **17 persons of diverse SOGIESC** conducted jointly by the GESI Network and ILGA Oceania in **mid-2025**.

This statement addresses two priority issues:

1. **Violence and Hate Crimes**
2. **Equality and Non-discrimination**

1. Violence and Hate Crimes

In the previous Universal Periodic Review of Solomon Islands, States made recommendations relating to protection from violence and access to justice for vulnerable groups. However, violence affecting people with diverse SOGIESC remains largely unaddressed.

Consultation participants reported experiences of verbal harassment, threats, physical violence, and family rejection. Transgender and gender-diverse participants described heightened exposure to public harassment and violence. Fear of stigma, retaliation, and secondary victimization discourages reporting, and participants expressed low confidence in law enforcement responses. Many interviewees are extremely fearful of being themselves in public. One recounted an experience while at a nightclub where someone became verbally and physically abusive towards them due to their expression of identity. Several interviewees talked about the hostility they had experienced, and how their acceptance in the community has been mixed – some have found acceptance in groups like churches and sporting bodies, while others experienced bullying and verbal abuse from members of those groups. One interviewee recounted an experience of severe abuse while in police custody. After a minor incident, they were detained for four days. During their detention they were slapped, mocked, forced to strip naked and sexually assaulted by another detainee. They reported being called names, being sworn at while simply going for a walk, and being physically attacked while out at a club with friends. Another interviewee reported being verbally abused all the time. These are everyday experiences lived by SOGIESC persons in the Solomon Islands.

There have been no significant legal or institutional reforms specifically addressing violence motivated by anti-SOGIESC sentiment. Law enforcement agencies lack clear operational guidance on responding to such cases, and the absence of disaggregated data continues to limit effective prevention and accountability.

We recommend that the Government of Solomon Islands:

1. Develop and implement clear operational guidance for police and justice sector actors on responding to violence affecting people with diverse SOGIESC, using victim-centered and confidentiality-focused approaches, with the following indicators:
 - Adoption of national police guidance or SOPs explicitly referencing SOGIESC within 24 months
 - At least 80% of frontline police officers trained on SOGIESC-sensitive response procedures within 3 years
 - Inclusion of child-specific safeguards for SOGIESC-related cases involving persons under 18
2. Establish or strengthen safe and confidential reporting mechanisms, with referral pathways to health, legal, and psychosocial support services, measured by:
 - Establishment of at least one confidential reporting mechanism per province
 - Annual public reporting on the number of SOGIESC - related cases reported and referred disaggregated by age and gender identity
 - Availability of specialized child-friendly reporting pathways for children and adolescents
3. Strengthen legal and policy frameworks to prevent and respond to violence and harmful conduct, including when motivated by SOGIESC, with indicators such as:
 - Introduction of policy or legislative provisions recognizing bias-motivated violence within 3–5 years
 - Collection of disaggregated administrative data on violence based on SOGIESC, including age-specific data for children

2. Equality and Non-discrimination

People with diverse SOGIESC remain largely invisible in national laws, policies, and development frameworks. During the previous review, the government did not accept any recommendations about addressing discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics.

Colonial-era provisions criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct remain in force. Although these provisions are reportedly not actively enforced, consultation participants consistently reported that their continued existence creates fear, insecurity, and reluctance to seek protection or services, particularly from law enforcement and public institutions

Since the previous review, Solomon Islands has articulated commitments to gender equality and social inclusion through policy and development frameworks. However, these commitments have not yet been translated into explicit measures addressing discrimination based on SOGIESC.

Participants reported extensive and severe ongoing discrimination in employment, education, healthcare, and access to public services, with limited avenues for redress. One participant reported being denied a receptionist position at a charitable organization due to her sexual orientation. Another anticipated difficulty securing employment, citing concerns about discrimination during recruitment. A third individual left a retail position due to a hostile work environment and inadequate wages. One person said they face daily verbal abuse and sexual harassment from other students at school and reported feeling as though they are the "only openly gay student" in a school of 1,600 students. Another individual describes

school and university environments as "very bad" with pervasive criticism. Several others reported bullying in high school, with other intersectional factors (such as disability) exacerbating experiences of abuse in the school environment. They recounted experiences at other health facilities where healthcare workers made judgmental jokes about their sexual health, leaving them feeling stigmatized and unsafe. Another individual experienced difficulty accessing public services for fear of being identified as a gay.

We recommend that the Government of Solomon Islands:

1. Integrate SOGIESC inclusion into national gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights policies, with measurable commitments including:
 - Explicit reference to SOGIESC in at least two national policy frameworks within 3 years
 - Delivery of mandatory non-discrimination training to at least 70% of public servants in education, health, police, and social services sectors
 - Inclusion of anti-bullying protections for SOGIESC-diverse children in education policies
2. Adopt anti-discrimination measures that explicitly include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, assessed by:
 - Enactment of legislation or binding policy instruments within 4–5 years
 - Establishment of accessible complaint mechanisms, including for children, with annual reporting on complaints received and resolved
3. Review and repeal legal provisions criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct, in line with international human rights standards, with indicators including:
 - Completion of a legal review process within 2 years
 - Formal repeal or amendment of criminal provisions within one UPR cycle
 - Public dissemination of guidance to law enforcement confirming non-criminalization

Advanced Questions

1. Police and Justice Sector Guidance (Violence)

How does the Government plan to develop and implement clear operational guidance for police and justice sector actors on responding to violence against persons with diverse SOGIESC, and what timeline and training targets has it set, including for cases involving children?

2. Safe Reporting and Support Mechanisms

What measures are being taken to establish safe, confidential, and child-friendly reporting mechanisms for SOGIESC-related violence, and how will the Government ensure access to legal, health, and psychosocial support services nationwide?

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks on Violence

How does the Government intend to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to prevent and respond to violence and harmful conduct motivated by SOGIESC, and how will progress be monitored and reported during the next UPR cycle?

4. Integration of SOGIESC in Policies and Training

What concrete steps is the Government taking to integrate SOGIESC into national gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights policies, and to provide systematic non-discrimination training for public officials, educators, and service providers?

5. Anti-Discrimination Measures

When does the Government plan to adopt explicit anti-discrimination measures covering sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, and what mechanisms will be established to enable victims, including children, to seek redress?

6. Decriminalization of Consensual Same-Sex Conduct

What is the Government's roadmap for reviewing and repealing laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct, in line with international human rights standards, and how will it mitigate the impact of these laws in the interim?

Thank you for your attention