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Item 6 – UPR Adoption -Iran
Statement by:
International Lesbian and Gay Association
Joined by
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
March 19, 2015

Mr. President;

During the first cycle of Iran's UPR review in 2010, the Islamic Republic of Iran received three recommendations on sexual orientation and gender identity, all of which were rejected.

Few months ago, during the second cycle of Iran's UPR, the number of recommendation related to sexual orientation and gender identity rose to 13. Countries from across the globe, from Eastern and Western Europe, Latin America, and North America joint hands in demanding the Islamic Republic of Iran to repeal its sodomy law, to ensure the rights and freedom of LGBT community members, and to protect the rights of people with different sexual orientations and gender identities. The four-fold increase in LGBT rights-related recommendations is a clear indication of the international community's grave concerns regarding the ongoing human rights violations of the Iranian LGBT individuals.

Iran remains one of the few countries on earth where consensual same-sex relations between two men is punishable by death. The Islamic republic of Iran also considers being "homosexual" –both for men and women –a crime, punishable by 74 lashes. The government has banned any discussion of sexual orientation –including homosexuality and bisexuality– in print publications, online media, and broadcast programs. Individuals have been arrested, harassed, and persecuted for talking publically about these issues. As for transsexuality, Iran requires trans individuals to undergo sex-reassignment surgery in order for them to be legally recognized, while no legal and practical measures are in place to protect individuals from discrimination and abuse based on gender identity.

Despite repeated demands by various UN human rights mechanism, including the Human Rights Committee (in 2011), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 2013) and multiple requests by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, the Iranian government has so far refused to acknowledge the human rights of LGBT community members. As we just learned, Iran has totally or partially rejected all second cycle UPR recommendations on sexual orientation and gender identity, including Denmark's recommendation to ensure freedom of all individuals from torture regardless of their sexual orientation.

The Universality of human rights- including the right to life, liberty, and security- is non-negotiable. All individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity, are entitled to these rights. The Islamic Republic of Iran cannot hide behind cultural relativism to deny the fundamental rights of the LGBT people.

Thank you