

UNITED NATIONS INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

REPORT ON SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

The latest report produced by the Independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, will be presented to the UN General Assembly on 24 October 2019. It focuses on the social, cultural and economic inclusion of LGBT individuals. The report builds on the understanding that “an inclusive society enables people to enjoy protection from violence and discrimination, and leaders in the social, cultural, political and other fields can have an important role in communicating, motivating and fostering that inclusiveness.”



Photo credit to Catherine de Preux de Baets

Findings relate to key areas of concern for the life of every person: education, employment, housing, health, public spaces, religious and political discourse. The report also addresses the topic of intersectionality, to underscore that any analysis of the causes and consequences of discrimination must consider multiple characteristics of a person’s lived experience, such as age, gender, disability, socioeconomic, migratory and citizenship status. The list of identities addressed in the report is non-exhaustive, but it will hopefully allow some of these lived experiences to be made visible and, therefore, addressable. At last, the report discusses dynamics of inclusion and presents conclusions and recommendations for moving forward.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Independent Expert concludes that inclusion is key to enable people to enjoy a life free from violence and discrimination. In order to break the cycle of exclusion, the Independent expert highlights effective State measures, including the unique role of leaders in different fields, which impact positively on the misconceptions, fears and prejudices. Urgent responses are required from States to:

- (a) Carry out law review and reform and adopt legislation that establishes anti-discrimination measures with explicit reference to SOGI;
- (b) Enact public policies mainstreaming LGBT concerns across health, education, employment, housing, poverty reduction, food security and access to justice;
- (c) Increase political participation of LGBT persons in all decision-making processes concerning them;
- (d) Promote access to justice and combat impunity of human rights abuses;
- (e) Nurture partnerships with and between non-State actors;
- (f) Recognise the need to promote social and cultural change and engage in public awareness and sensitisation campaigns to increase positive, humane and real representations of LGBT persons.

The text of the report is available [here](#).

SECTOR ANALYSIS

The report carries out sector analysis with the intent of making visible different instances of discrimination and how they interact to create lived experiences of exclusion:

Education: LGBT pupils and the children of LGBT parents face abuse in educational settings, including teasing, name-calling, intimidation, physical violence, social isolation, cyberbullying, physical and sexual assault, and death threats. The response of schools is often poor.

Employment: Discrimination and abuse based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression takes place in all stages of the employment cycle (hiring, advancement, training, compensation and termination).

Housing: LGBT persons may face discrimination in access to housing because of unfair treatment by public and private landlords, estate agencies and credit providers. They may also be denied leases and mortgages or be harassed by neighbours and evicted from their homes.

Health: There is ample evidence of health disparities in the LGBT population, such as higher rates of breast and cervical cancer, HIV infection and of mental health concerns, such as anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide. The criminalization and pathologisation of LGBT people have had a deep impact on public policy, legislation and jurisprudence.

Intersectionalities: some key findings

Women: Lesbian, bisexual and trans women are more likely to be excluded from opportunities of economic empowerment and subjected to the most heinous forms of violence, including forcible impregnation, attacks with acid and domestic violence.

Young persons: LGBT youth experience disadvantages connected with economic dependence and reliance on family and community networks. They are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

Older persons: Older LGBT persons face social isolation and loneliness. Family rejection, limitations in the recognition of certain forms of families, and limited access to assisted reproduction techniques often leave older LGBT people with minimal family support.

Persons living with disabilities: Due to complex factors, including living arrangements, persons with disabilities can often be denied sexual expression, which can be connected to a lack of privacy stemming from the accompaniment of support persons.

Asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons: As they flee discrimination and violence at home, LGBT persons on the move may be at enhanced risk of violence, abuse and exploitation at all stages of their journey and at the hands of immigration officers, traffickers and smugglers.

Victims of humanitarian and natural disasters: Pre-existing inequalities, discrimination and violence are exacerbated in humanitarian settings, putting those who are already most vulnerable at further risk. When these barriers are not considered, the accessibility of humanitarian services to LGBT persons is compromised.

The text of the report is available [here](#).