

## **HRC 44 | Address violations suffered by the LGBTI community and those who defend their rights**

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**In a statement to the Human Rights Council, a group of civil society organisations urged the Office of the High Commissioner to do more to ensure we can all be free and equal, regardless of our sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.**



While welcoming the recognition by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the [specific impacts of the COVID19 pandemic on LGBTI persons](#) and the guidance provided to States on how to address the situation, civil society organisations [called on the High Commissioner to continue to specifically include LGBTI issues in future actions on COVID19](#).

The [joint verbal statement](#), built on a joint written statement submitted by 187 organisations in the lead up to the Council session which [addressed the specific impacts of the pandemic and measures taken by governments to address it on the LGBTI community and defenders](#). 'National policies addressing COVID-19 and its economic consequences have had disparate and discriminatory impacts on LGBTI persons and those who defend their rights. At the same time LGBTI rights defenders and organisations have been on the front lines, filling gaps and providing essential services for their communities during the pandemic' said ISHR's Tess McEvoy.

The [ASPIRE Guidelines on COVID-19](#) published by the UN Independent Expert on SOGI, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, which make recommendations for governments to support LGBTI defenders, learn from their achievements and ensure LGBT voices are represented and reflected at all stages of the elaboration of COVID-19 response measures, were a welcome development in this regard.

'Despite all efforts and campaigns to date, the rights of LGBTI persons and defenders continue to be systematically violated. COVID has only exacerbated these challenges. LGBTI defenders and organisations need to be genuinely consulted at all stages of the development of responses to COVID-19 for them to be effective.'

Read the [full statement here](#).

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Photo: ISHR.