

[HRC44 | Conversion “therapy” violates human rights of LGBT persons, says UN Independent Expert on SOGI](#)

05.05.2020

In his report presented to the Human Rights Council’s 44th session, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), Victor Madrigal-Borloz, explored global practices of so-called ‘conversion therapy’, their human rights implications, impact on victims, connection with violence and discrimination, and measures to prevent the practice.



[The report](#) explains ‘Conversion therapy’ as an umbrella term to describe wide-ranging interventions to effect change from non-heterosexual to heterosexual, and from trans or gender diverse to cisgender; premised on the belief that SOGI “can and should be changed or suppressed when they do not fall under what others in a given setting and time perceive as the desirable norm.” The Independent Expert concludes that ‘Conversion therapy’ inflicts severe pain and suffering, results in long-lasting psychological and physical damage and constitutes an egregious violation of rights to dignity and non-discrimination, bodily autonomy, health, to freedom of conscience and religion, to free expression and may also amount to a breach to the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment.

The report reported conversion therapy practices in all regions of the world, by both State and non-State agents including mental health-care providers and faith-based organizations. The Independent Expert calls for a global ban on practices of “conversion therapy”, that must include clearly defining prohibited practices, creating mechanisms to provide access to reparation for victims, taking urgent measures to protect children, and fostering dialogue with key stakeholders including medical and health professionals, faith-based organizations, educational institutions and community-based organizations.

The Independent Expert notes that existing academic literature on conversion therapy disproportionately represents lived experiences from the global North. This observation is consistent with the overall [gap in data available that captures the lived realities of LGBT people](#). “Research and data collection is crucial to create visibility, build an evidence base on rights violations, disprove stereotypes feeding stigma and discrimination, and aid in policy formulation” said ISHR’s Tess McEvoy. In this regard, we welcome [ILGA’s global report on conversion therapy](#) -informed by activists, survivors and grassroots organisations- reporting how States and health professionals are speaking up against these practices globally. “The fact that compared to States, nearly three times as many civil society organisations contributed to the Independent Expert’s report, highlights the integral role played by defenders and civil society in informing the UN on lived realities on the ground,” McEvoy added.

Photo: Lorin Granger- Harvard Law Today