

UN Human Rights Council must act against discrimination and homophobia

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‘The time has come for the Human Rights Council to take a strong and principled stand in favour of equality and against homophobia and intolerance,’ said ISHR Director Phil Lynch.

Mr Lynch said that the timing of the High Commissioner’s report is opportune, with Russia’s parliament considering legislation to criminalise ‘homosexual propaganda’, and a bill to make homosexual activity an offence punishable by death – the so-called ‘Kill the Gays’ bill – back on the agenda in Uganda. ‘Such laws flagrantly violate international human rights standards,’ said Mr Lynch.

While Russia and Uganda may be extreme examples, they are far from isolated. ‘Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people remains widespread in both law and practice,’ said Mr Lynch.

‘Around the world, laws continue to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, from laws which criminalise homosexual activity to those which fail to recognise marriage equality. ISHR strongly supports the High Commissioner’s call for states to ensure the “repeal of discriminatory laws, the prohibition of discriminatory practices and action to counter violence”.’

In its statement to the Human Rights Council, ISHR also said that the UN and all member states should take action to support human rights defenders and protect them from intimidation, attacks and reprisals.

‘ISHR warmly welcomes Norway’s announcement that it will propose a landmark resolution to the Human Rights Council this session, calling for the elimination of laws which restrict the work of human rights defenders and the passage of laws which ensure that they are able to fully exercise their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, assembly, association and peaceful protest,’ said Mr Lynch. ‘The Council should show its support for human rights defenders by adopting this important resolution by consensus’.

ISHR also welcomed the High Commissioner’s appeal to all states to commit additional resources to sustain and strengthen the UN human rights system. ‘Respecting and protecting human rights is never more important than in times of austerity. Increased investment in human rights promotes security, peace and prosperity, making it not only the right thing morally and economically, but a wise exercise of enlightened self-interest,’ said Mr Lynch.

ISHR’s statement to the UN Human Rights Council is available [here](#).

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ISHR