

**United Nations Human Rights Council, 41st Session (24 June-12 July 2019)**  
**Item 3 – Clustered ID with IE on sexual orientation and gender identity**  
**Speaker: British Humanist Association Representative, Farah Mohammed**

We welcome the report of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly its recommendation that Member States repeal laws that criminalise consensual same-sex relations,<sup>1</sup> and the call for more data to be collected about the lived realities of LGBTI people around the world.

Although not specially mentioned in this report, we would like to remind the council of its previous commitments to ending the practice of ‘conversion therapy’ and the need for more robust data to enable effective legislative bans to be brought in. This seems at odds with the report from 2018 which specifically called for member states to ban such practices.<sup>2</sup> This lack of data renders the problem invisible to policy-makers, reinforces patterns of negation, and makes developing legislation to tackle this problem difficult.<sup>3</sup>

Conversion therapies are cruel and inhumane. They more often than not lead to psychological, physical, emotional, and spiritual damage in both the short and long term. However, as the 2018 report noted, ‘only a few States Members of the United Nations actually ban’ conversion therapies. Such practices are often carried out in secret within closed religious settings, where the scale, type, and harms caused remain undetected and unmeasurable by policy-makers.

I ask the Independent Expert what more can be done to ensure that data on ‘conversion therapies’ is collected and made available, and how we can support Member States to bring about effective bans on these practices whether they occur in medical, familial, or religious settings? We call on Member States to continue the positive trend seen in the past five years towards introducing prohibitions on conversion therapies.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, Data collection and management as a means to create heightened awareness of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (2019), Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,

[http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/38/43](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/38/43)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (2018),

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, Data collection and management as a means to create heightened awareness of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (2019), Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,

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