Trans Activists at the United Nations Raise Their Voices Against the Anti-Rights Pushback

press release, anti-gender movement

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At a time when the opposition to the rights of trans persons is increasingly used as a political weapon in many parts of the world, **fourteen trans and gender diverse activists have raised their voices at the United Nations** during the first week of the Human Rights Council, to an overwhelmingly positive response.

“States and global human rights mechanisms are increasingly aware that the ongoing attacks on the rights of trans persons are rooted in the same growing pushback against gender equality at large’, said the organisers of the 2023 Trans Advocacy Week. ‘**We are heartened to see a growing solidarity with our communities**, and look forward to seeing it turn into concrete action.”

The **United Nations Trans Advocacy Week is a collective project by non-governmental organisations**, offering trans activists a platform to make their voices heard on a global scale and in international human rights spaces. Since 2017, the initiative has been bringing trans and gender diverse human rights defenders to Geneva, Switzerland, to take part in the UN Human Rights Council during the June/July session.

The 2023 edition marked the return to in-person advocacy after the event was held virtually for the past three years, due to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. During Trans Advocacy Week participants attended meetings with UN human rights experts, UNAIDS and Global Fund representatives, States’ ambassadors and Special Envoys for the Rights of LGBTI persons.

Gathering from countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America, they shared perspectives on the diverse ways the anti-gender movement is impacting their communities at the local level; they participated in interactive dialogues at the Human Rights Council and delivered numerous statements; and they celebrated Victor Madrigal-Borloz, the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, as he presented his last report to the Council before the end of his tenure – a ground-breaking analysis dismantling the narratives arguing an opposition between freedom of religion and sexual and gender diversity.

Trans Advocacy Week delegates also welcomed country and civil society representatives to hear directly from them in a side event that highlighted the plight of trans people in many parts of the world, while also celebrating the recent progress made in UN spaces despite the growing presence of hostile narratives.

“Over the years, **Trans Advocacy Week has continued to grow and radically changed the landscape of trans and gender diverse activism at the UN**“, the organisers concluded. “It has contributed to introducing key issues affecting our communities worldwide, including the lack of legal gender recognition and the damages done by social exclusion and ‘conversion therapies’ among many others, while also solidifying allyship with feminist and other movements. To be seen and heard at the United Nations seemed unthinkable only a few decades ago, but there’s no turning back now, and **we owe this progress to the tireless work of human rights defenders worldwide**, including those who participated in this Trans Advocacy Week.”

Trans Advocacy Week is organised by:

- Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN)
- East Africa Trans Health and Advocacy Network (EATHAN)
- Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE)
- ILGA World
- Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights (RFSL)
- TGEU: Transgender Europe & Central Asia

UN Trans Advocacy Week is a collective project by non-governmental organisations, which has been held on the occasion of June/July sessions of the UN Human Rights Council since 2017.

2023 Specifics

- Participants in 2023 came from Thailand, El Salvador, Portugal, Belgium, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Indonesia, and Kenya.
- Statements delivered by participants included those in response to:
    - The report by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women on Custody, violence against women and children (read more)
    - The report by the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity on Freedom of religion or belief and equality for LGBT persons (statements 01 and 02)
    - The report of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women, about gendered inequalities of poverty (read more)

Press Contacts

ILGA World: Daniele Paletta (communications manager), media@ilga.org

GATE: Naomhán O'Connor (communications manager), press@gate.ngo

TGEU: Nadya Yurinova (Senior Communications Officer) comms@tgeu.org

EATHAN: Kalani Walter (Communications Assistant) kalani@eathan.org

APTN: Erik Nadir (Communications Officer) erik.n@weareaptn.org


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