

Committee: UN Women

Topic: Combating Violence Against LGBT Individuals in Religious Communities

Report of the Chairs

I. Theme of the Conference

Model United Nations San Antonio (MUNSA) is a conference dedicated to fostering authentic and passionate debate amongst delegates in order to generate solutions to current global issues. The theme of *MUNSA XXIV: Envision* encapsulates our mission to urge delegates to foresee a future in which these problems have been dissolved. With collaboration in mind, delegates from every committee are encouraged to visualize innovative resolutions and a prosperous world to come. Together, we will propel ourselves into an age in which brilliant ideas converge to transform our world and address its most paramount issues.

II. Rationale

Recently, public acknowledgment of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community has surged. Consequently, discrimination against this community has risen in prevalence, especially in the Middle East and North Africa.⁶ LGBT individuals have been forced into hiding in their home countries due to unjust laws. Many communities infringe upon the quality of life and basic human rights of LGBT members due to religious teachings. This committee will achieve a more inclusive and prosperous future in which the LGBT community is protected and receives equal educational and employment opportunities through collaboration.³

III. Background of the Topic

Violent discrimination and mistreatment of LGBT individuals is prominent in many religious communities; however, it is especially common in regions where Islam is the dominant religion, including the Middle East and Northern Africa. Scholars have re-examined Islamic teachings and found that the condemnation of the LGBT community is often misinterpreted. While the commonality of the LGBT community has not changed, awareness of it has. Many

religions, like Islam, have begun to reevaluate their teachings to progress alongside today's society.² The UN Commission on the Status of Women began to build the platform to balance religion and gender equality. UN Women led an endeavor to sustain gender equality in religious communities by implementing faith-based programs to promote health, peace, security, and the eradication of poverty.² Many religious congregations in Africa, especially in Ethiopia, have been trained by the UN to reject violence and preach against it.³

The first march for gay rights occurred in 1979 in the United States. Since then, the number of people advocating for the LGBT community has grown continuously as the idea of sexual identity has increased in prevalence.⁹ While LGBT and sexual identity movements have begun more recently, historians agree that there is factual evidence proving that homosexual activity has occurred in society for hundreds of years and is mentioned in most religious texts including the Bible, Quran, and Torah.⁹

IV. Contemporary Evidence of the Topic

Discrimination against the LGBT community is most common in Nigeria, Cameroon, Uganda, Russia, Honduras, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia. Most of these countries belong to one dominant religion where same-sex relationships are not tolerated. As sexual expression has become more common, bigotry has increased in prevalence.⁴ Due to intolerance, most LGBT individuals in these countries face threats, arrests, torture, and death.

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women was established in 1996 and has authorized global awareness, initiated anti-violence campaigns, invested in long-term solutions for gender inequality, and promoted women's empowerment.² The UN Women committee has established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in regards to gender equality. As homosexuality is common in society today, it is imperative that gender equality is achieved.

The Global Platform on Gender Equality and Religion was launched in 2017 and has allowed UN Women to collaborate in order to initiate effective solutions for gender equality and empowerment. The narratives of this platform advocate for a broadened faith resource and extended opportunities for community development.⁸ The UN Women's committee has

established ongoing solutions with religious communities to provide a safe space for LGBT individuals.

V. References and Research Resources

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6. Audacity in Adversity (2019, September)
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/04/16/audacity-adversity/lgbt-activism-middle-east-and-north-africa>
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<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/menstrual-hygiene-day-education/>

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VI. Note to the Delegates

Thank you for participating in MUNSA XXIV and choosing to be apart of our conference. Our names are Carter Murray and Anna West, and we will be your co-chairs for UN Women. We look forward to a unique and intriguing debate that creates an enlightening experience for both the chairs and the delegates. If you have any questions or concerns you may reach us through the contact information below.

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