

United Nations Association

Westminster Branch

Campaigning for a strong, credible and effective UN



HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES: IS THE UN THE RIGHT FORUM TO CAMPAIGN?

Background notes on UN activity

1] The UN identifies with the Three Pillars of Freedom; freedom from want, from fear and to live in dignity

In reality, we want freedom from bullying and violence but also we must tackle prejudice and fear itself. We want to be better advocates for causes which underpin the rationale of the UN. Three days in 1948.

9 December Convention against Genocide

10 December [UDHR](#), Declaration. "We have human rights because we exist, not because we are gay or straight and irrespective of our gender identities" said Harvey Milk. Otherwise we arrive in the dystopian world of Winston Smith who in the book *1984* finds himself in a world beyond our imagining.

11 December the day after UDHR, the UNGA recognised that 'the United Nations cannot remain indifferent to the fate of minorities' but, to this day, the rights of minorities have shown up one of the UN's greatest weaknesses. For too many minorities, justice remains a distant vision. These three consecutive days in 1948 show the strengths and weaknesses of the UN.

The determination of the [Genocide Convention](#)

The aspiration of the Declaration

The retreat from action on the fate of minorities.

It is we the people, not governments, who must provide the energy to tackle these challenges.

The UN provides no equivalent single route to achievement. It has systems and subsystems and sometimes changes trickle down. Here are some examples.

A] [The Human Rights Council](#)

Uganda - so-called 'Anti-Homosexuality Bill' 2 years ago by Parliament liable to affect HIV programmes. [India](#) has made advances.

June 17, 2011, South Africa requesting the HCHR draft report on situation of LGBT citizens worldwide to follow up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The resolution was passed 23 to 19 and was the first such resolution. There are other developments [in S Africa](#)

B] (Expert) [Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

This monitors a member state's record on its claims to uphold ESC rights.

[does it work?](#) Egypt and Cameroon are members who try to obstruct its work.

C] [ILO](#) responsible for [Teenage Teaching programmes](#).

D] **WHO** is spearheading the global response to HIV/AIDS today lauded India's efforts to provide prevention and treatment services for men and transgender people
[Uganda step backwards](#) – away from realizing human rights for its people and away from an effective, evidence and rights-based HIV response," stressed Special Rapporteur on health.

E] **UN itself**

i) **UN SG** happy to secure [release of a young gay couple](#) sentenced to 14 years in prison. [also](#) read this

F] **UNESCO December 2011**, *Rio* - launched the [UN's first-ever international consultation](#) to address bullying against LGBT students in schools and universities. [Examining existing policies and programmes](#) around the world in order to share best practices with ministries of education. Remember the systems and subsystems . news from [Other regions](#)

ii) **1995 International Year of Tolerance**

understanding of the other

those with physical and mental disabilities, age, race, faith, gender, sexuality, - what can we learn from each other's programmes to fight intolerance and prejudice.

iii) **The [Culture of Peace](#)**

G] **UN GA** and [new report](#)

December 2008, Dutch/French-initiated, EU-backed statement was presented to UNGA originally intended to be adopted as resolution, prompted **Arab League-backed statement opposing it**. Both statements remain open for signature and neither of them has been officially adopted by the UNGA.

July 2010, Vernor Muñoz, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, presented to UN GA interim report on the **human right to comprehensive sexual education**, in which he cited the Yogyakarta Principles as a Human Rights standard. In the ensuing discussion, the majority of General Assembly Third Committee members recommended against adopting the principles. The Representative of Malawi, speaking on behalf of all African States argued that the report:

NGO recognition

But how do NGOs get their voices heard? They have consultative status with Economic and Social Council. Read here about the [UN Committee on ngos which examines these](#).

Its membership in 2006 included Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, France, Germany, India, Iran, Peru, Pakistan, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sudan, Turkey, USA and Zimbabwe.

The Committee left pending [Coalition gaie et lesbienne du Quebec](#), because Pakistan said its financial statement showed 95% funding from govt. According to the rules, to receive consultative status, the NGO needed to prove its independence from the Government.

Pakistan also questioned credentials of the [International Centre for Peace Studies](#), an India-based NGO,

Institutional

[OSCE/ODIHR](#)

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe includes 56 participating States from Europe, North America, and Central Asia. Its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights supports implementation of [initiatives on tolerance & non-discrimination](#), human rights and democracy.

In 2008, the 34 member countries of the **Organization of American States** unanimously approved a declaration affirming that human rights protections extend to sexual orientation and gender identity. There has been no equivalent move by the Arab League or the Africa Union

Anne Frank House

[The Anne Frank House promotes her ideals](#), not only in relation to the times in which she lived, but also in terms of their contemporary significance. Educational projects combat present-day forms of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia and encourage tolerance and respect for others

[UPR Info](#) is an NGO based in Geneva aiming to raise awareness and providing capacity-building tools to the different actors of the UPR process, such as UN Member States, NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions and civil society in general. [It runs tutorials on the UPR.](#)

Some politicians have spoken out for these rights.

See [Hilary Clinton](#)

Also see [MRG](#)