



**Forum: Human Rights Council**

**Question of: Protecting LGBTQAI+ youth**

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## **I. Description of the Issue**

*“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.” (Article 22 of the universal human rights declaration [Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations](#))*

Wouldn't this also include (young) LGBTQAI+ people? While LGBTQAI+ people face discrimination still face discrimination in different ways, the situation of minor LGBTQAI+ people is especially problematic. Even if the country they live in is not one of the over 60 countries that criminalize homosexual relationships or being a different aspect of LGBTQAI+ like transgender or intersexual, they are often not accepted how they are which can take different forms such as: being bullied at school or on the internet, conversion therapies or homelessness just to name a few. Being discriminated against can have severe effects such as dropping out of school or developing long lasting psychological issues.

## **II. Definition of Key Terms**

### **LGBTQAI+**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex

### **Intersex**

A person whose body does not have the typical female or male characteristics. Especially before intersex people were protected by law they were often discriminated against which sometimes leads to forced medical interventions.

### **Conversion therapy**

A harmful treatment committed by multiple institutions using multiple methods that tries to change the gender identity and sexuality of people to what is considered to be normal (turning into cisgender, homosexual to heterosexual). This kind of “therapy” causes severe psychological issues sometimes even leading to suicide. Conversion therapy is used especially on younger people. In France and Canada conversion therapy is forbidden by law since 2021.



### **III. Background Information**

#### **Being homeless**

Since many families do not tolerate their children being LGBTQAI+ many of them have to leave their homes. After leaving their families the situation of those individuals often gets even worse. Many become homeless which often leads to violence, sexual abuse as well as multiple health issues which can be both psychological and physical. Further their desperate situation leads or forces them to damaging actions such as prostitution or taking drugs to be able to deal with the gravity of their situation which again worsens the situation. Even in shelters where they are supposed to get help (young) LGBTQ people can still be discriminated against because of their gender or sexual orientation.

#### **Families not willing to accept their children's identity**

As there are many families not accepting their children's identity, they often use practices that try to change their view on their own gender or sexual orientation to what they consider as normal or right. The so-called conversion therapy is a procedure that aims to change people to cisgender or to be heterosexual. While it is used on older people, the youth is its main target as the parents can decide about a lot of the things that their children should do. While there are multiple institutions that practice conversion therapies using different methods, all of them result in multiple severe psychological issues.

While conversion therapy aims to change a person's gender or sexual orientation there are also procedures to change a person's body. Intersexual children are threatened by such treatments. Those treatments are not needed from a medical point of view but are often irreversible, sometimes even including the removal of reproductive organs. Often they are done in an age where the child is not able to decide freely in favor or against such an impactful intervention. Different countries have taken measures to prevent this kind of practice.

#### **Internet**

The internet is both, danger and a chance for (young) LGBTQAI+ people. It can educate about topics possibly not discussed at home or at school and it allows them to connect with other LGBTQAI+ people giving them an environment where they are respected and valued. Despite those positive sides cyber bullying of LGBTQAI+ people on the internet is no rarity.

#### **Schools**

Being LGBTQAI+ often leads to becoming the target of bullying at school. Not only by other students but sometimes also by teachers and other employees. Being bullied and harassed often leads to being afraid to go to school and other psychological issues which can in the worst case result in suicide. Being absent at school too often can lead to worse grades or dropping out of school early which can become a problem for the future of a LGBTQAI+ person.



## **IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

### **Human Rights Watch**

An NGO consisting of people from different countries which has the goal to protect endangered people including minorities such as LGBTQAI+ people by activism, investigation and spreading information.

### **South Africa**

In 2006 South Africa has been the first country in Africa and one of the first countries worldwide that legalized same-sex marriage. Many LGBTQAI+ people from different African countries are fleeing from discrimination and moving to South Africa. Still, as well as in other countries, LGBTQAI+ people living in South Africa are not entirely safe from discrimination.

### **USA**

In 2023 the US-state Florida introduced the "Parental Rights in Education" law to restrict LGBTQAI+ education. Even though the law passed it has been criticized heavily by different people including parents, activists, or the white house.

### **Vietnam**

Vietnam made a huge development concerning LGBTQAI+ in the past years. 2013 same sex relationships have been decriminalized, since 2015 transgender persons are allowed to change their names. Since 2022 homosexuality is no longer considered a disease. Even though the situation of LGBTQAI+ people is legally changed, many LGBTQAI+ teenagers still face challenges and psychological issues. The lack of education about LGBTQAI+ often leads to discrimination and bullying.

### **Russia**

Despite a decriminalization of homosexuality in 1993 LGBTQAI+ people face legal discrimination and persecution in Russia. Since 2013 the is "public promotion of homosexuality" officially considered a crime. Media such as books or movies that portrayed homosexual relations are considered as "propaganda" which can lead to making them inaccessible to people. While the ban only considered minors in 2013, it was expanded to adults as well in 2023.

### **Malta**

2015 Malta passed a law, the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act which includes forbidding discrimination of people expressing their gender identity, protecting intersex children from unwanted surgeries and enables people to decide their own gender and let it legally be recognized without a psychological diagnosis. Minors are able to



let their legal guardians apply for a legal gender recognition if it is in their best interest and they agree to it.

## Poland

The government of Poland is working on a new law to reduce sexual education in Poland. While the leader of Poland's ruling party claims to protect children by such a law Human Rights Watch criticized it, seeing it as a threat for LGBTQAI+ education.

## V. Timeline of Events

1990	WHO stops classifying homosexuality as a disease
2013	Russia passes a law to ban the "public promotion of homosexuality"
2013	UNs Free & Equal campaign
2015	Malta passes the first law to protect intersex children from unwanted surgeries and treatments
2016	The Asia Pacific Forum of National Human rights Institutions adopts the law introduced by Malta
2016	First Independent expert on sexual orientation and Gender Identity
2019	The European Parliament adopts the law introduced by Malta
2021	France and Canada prohibit conversion therapy by law
2023	Ruling Party in Poland plans to amend Poland's education laws to reduce sexual education



	including education about LGBTQAI+
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## **VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

As many countries have the goal to improve the situation of LGBTQAI + people they have taken several measures to achieve it. Among those measures are the changing of laws concerning LGBTQIA+ such as legalizing relationships between people belonging to the same sex or protecting LGBTQAI+ people from discrimination and exclusion by passing laws specifically for this issue. In order to increase the acceptance of LGBTQAI+ people in the society there have been campaigns to inform people about LGBTQAI+ in order to give the correct knowledge as well as campaigns to combat LGBTQAI+ hate. Many schools around the world have established education about LGBTQAI+, gender neutral bathrooms and guidelines to use chosen names and the correct pronouns of the students

## **VII. Possible Solutions**

- Educating about LGBTAI+ in order to stop prejudice and discrimination.
- More public representation.
- Further laws to fight discrimination and inequality.

## **VIII. Questions Delegates Should Consider during Research**

- Which measures has my country taken to protect young LGBTQAI+ people?
- In which direction is my country developing in terms of LGBTQAI+?
- Which part of LGBTQAI+ faces the most discrimination in my country?
- What is my countries' general position on LGBTQAI+?
- What is the religious and cultural opinion of my country?

## **IX. Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

### **Free & Equal campaign**

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

### **UN mandate Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity**

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G11/148/76/PDF/G1114876.pdf?OpenElement>

Mandate for an independent expert on LGBTQAI+ to improve LGBTQAI+ protection.



<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/154/15/PDF/G1615415.pdf?OpenElement>

## **X. Useful Links**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/publications>

<https://www.unfe.org/learn-more/>

<https://www.unhcr.org/media/38748>

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/FAQs-English.pdf>

## **XI. Sources**

### **General introduction to the issue**

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Violence-English.pdf>

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Criminalization-English.pdf>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2017/05/embrace-diversity-and-protect-trans-and-gender-diverse-children-and?LangID=E&NewsID=21622>

<https://plan-international.org/srhr/lgbtiq-inclusion/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/about-lgbti-people-and-human-rights>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2015/05/discriminated-and-made-vulnerable-young-lgbt-and-intersex-people-need?LangID=E&NewsID=15941>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/lgbti-rights/>

<https://www.unhcr.org/media/38748>

[https://internap.hrw.org/features/features/lgbt\\_laws/](https://internap.hrw.org/features/features/lgbt_laws/)

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/lgbti-people>

<https://www.unhcr.org/media/39329>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/nhri>

### **Key Terms**

<https://www.unhcr.org/media/39329>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/BackgroundNoteHumanRightsViolationsagainstIntersexPeople.pdf>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/SexualOrientation/ConversionTherapyReport.pdf>



<https://www.ohchr.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/intersex-people>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1112242>

### **Homelessness**

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENGLISH-Youth-Homelessness-FINAL-V2.pdf>

### **Non accepting communities**

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/SexualOrientation/ConversionTherapyReport.pdf>

### **The Internet**

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/online-communities-and-lgbtq-youth>

### **Schools**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/effective-inclusion-lgbt-persons>

<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/lgbtq>

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Bullying-and-Violence-in-School.pdf>

### **Human Rights Watch**

<https://www.hrw.org/about/about-us>

### **South Africa**

<https://www.dw.com/en/being-lgbtq-in-africa-still-draws-stigma-violence-and-criminal-charges/a-62024366>

### **USA**

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Dont-Say-Gay-Impact-Jan-2023.pdf>

### **Vietnam**

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/12/vietnam-lgbt-youth-unprotected>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/18/vietnam-adopts-global-lgbt-health-standard>

### **Russia**

<https://www.dw.com/en/russia-putin-seeks-constitutional-ban-on-gay-marriage/a-52617850>

<https://www.dw.com/en/putin-says-gay-propaganda-law-not-discriminatory/a-17371097>



<https://www.dw.com/en/russia-deports-german-accused-of-lgbt-propaganda/a-65490012>

### **Malta**

p. 50, 63

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

### **Poland**

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/23/poland-proposed-law-threatens-childrens-rights>

### **Previous attempts**

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/about-mandate>

<https://www.hrc.org/news/ten-ways-the-united-nations-has-protected-lgbtq-human-rights>