

23rd session of the Human Rights Council
Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

- delivered by Sheherezade Kara

Thank you Mr President,
Madam High Commissioner,

We commend you for the firm position your office has taken in combating discrimination and violence on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and would like to thank you for highlighting this as a key human rights issue in your Annual Report.

We share your concern about the detrimental effect of the global financial crisis on the realisation of human rights across the globe, which is particularly affecting those marginalised groups who are worst positioned to deal with the effects. Over recent years the Human Rights Council has been presented with documentation from Special Procedures highlighting the denial of basic economic and social rights to marginalised groups, including those facing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Furthermore, we share your dismay at the increase of extremist and xenophobic discourse. As you stated this morning, it is shocking to see democratic societies stepping back into the ugly injustice of racism and discrimination on the grounds of faith, demonising minorities and migrants. In too many countries across Europe and central Asia, extreme right and neo-Nazi groups have been targeting minorities, including on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We thank you for your continued efforts to support civil society in our work to advance human rights, and for bringing attention to the challenges we collectively face. We share your deep regret that reprisals against human rights defenders continue to be an issue, including at the Human Rights Council.

Finally Madam High Commissioner, we would like to thank you for the active participation of the OHCHR in the recent regional consultations on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, including in the final conference which took place in Oslo last month. We commit our support to you and your Office in your work to ensure protection of the human rights of all people, without discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you.