# Trans Activists Advocate for Their Rights at the United Nations

The second UN Trans Advocacy Week gathered together 23 trans and gender diverse human rights defenders from 19 countries for the 38th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. This historic event was a joint initiative by a trans-led collaborative work, centering trans activism and issues at this significant, global arena. It was organized by the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN), Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE), the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights (RFSL), and Transgender Europe (TGEU).

During the week of 18-22 June, the trans and gender diverse human rights defenders delivered two oral statements at the Human Rights Council, commenting on the latest reports of the Special Rapporteur on Health and the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI); attended private meetings with the Independent Expert and Special Rapporteurs and their staff; and met with representatives from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as with various other UN agencies, missions and donors.

The UN Trans Advocacy Week commenced just as the World Health Organization announced it had removed all trans-related categories from the International Classifications of Diseases' chapter on mental and behavioral disorders. Depathologization of trans identities has been a prolonged and difficult fight, so this welcome news further strengthened the advocacy efforts of the group present in Geneva.

The human rights defenders also contributed to the groundbreaking consultation on legal recognition of gender identity and depathologization convened by the UN Independent Expert on SOGI, and hosted two side events addressing trans issues within the gender framework and on the Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10 and their relevance to achieving trans human rights worldwide.

The UN Trans Advocacy Week has been a fundamental opportunity to highlight trans related issues on a global stage, where historically they have been ignored, invisibilized and subsumed into the framework of advocacy centering on sexual orientation. The dialogues begun and continued during this week will serve to further strengthen the ongoing efforts of trans activists over the past several decades, enabling additional engagements with the UN arena for the remainder of the year and into the future.

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