Trans Rights at the UN: Activists and States Chart Ways Forward

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At the close of the 47th Human Rights Council and the 5th UN Trans Advocacy Week,* we have seen a significant increase in diplomatic missions engaging with issues relating to trans rights. A momentous statement on protecting trans people's rights was released by 27 states under the newly formed Group of Friends of the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

"Around the world," Chile told the Human Rights Council on behalf of the group, "transgender and other gender-diverse people face extraordinary levels of violence and harassment. We call upon member States, as a matter of urgency, to respect, to protect, and to fulfil the human rights of transgender persons – **especially transgender women.**"

During the Human Rights Council, one Side Events and one closed-door event under Chatham House Rules were held under the umbrella of Trans Advocacy Week. *An Epidemic of Violence: Defending the Lives of Transgender Women* cast a light on how anti-transgender stigma, denial of opportunity, and intersecting vulnerabilities compound to create a culture of violence targeting trans women, and gave guidance on how to make our societies a safer space. The closed-door event provided a safe space for trans and gender-diverse human rights defenders to interact, exchange, and share their challenges, experiences, and concerns with senior United Nations officials.

Additionally, co-organisers of Trans Advocacy Week joined a second collaborative Side Event. *Feminist and LGBTI Movements: Uniting is Our Strength* provided a platform for trans-inclusive feminism by bringing together women and LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders to speak about challenges and opportunities and to share reflections on the importance of inclusive and intersectional feminist LGBTI mobilisation. Alongside this event was the release of An Affirmation of Feminist Principles, outlining 8 principles fundamental to feminism and the achievement of gender equality and equality for LGBTI people. This statement reinforces the place that trans, intersex, and non-binary people have alongside many others in feminist movements.

Furthermore, the organisers welcomed the release of the report on gender by the Independent Expert on SOGI. 'The law of inclusion' provides clear guidance for member States regarding safeguarding the rights of trans and gender-diverse people and recommendations on gender self-determination, legal gender recognition, and the rights of trans and gender-diverse minors.

This year, we invited trans- and LGBTI-led organisations to show their support for the work we do at the UN during Trans Advocacy Week. We would like to thank those organisations that signed up to endorse this work. An increase in engagement at the UN with issues relating to trans rights is a significant step forward in the protection of trans communities globally, but it is only the first step on a long road to ensuring protection against stigma, discrimination and violence that our communities face on a daily basis. The engagements at the 47th Human Rights Council demonstrate just how crucial UN Trans Advocacy Week is for increasing the voices of trans persons to encourage governments to step up their efforts to protect trans human rights.

What is UN Trans Advocacy Week?

Founded in 2017, UN Trans Advocacy Week is a collective project of the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) , GATE, ILGA World, the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights (RFSL), and TGEU. Its mission is to provide an opportunity and a platform for trans human rights activists and defenders to raise awareness of the human rights situation of their communities with diplomatic missions and UN bodies in Geneva, and to advocate for trans-inclusive laws, policies and protections at the highest levels of governance.

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