

**UPR - Russian Federation**  
**Statement by Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network**

10 June, 2009

We welcome Russia's acceptance of recommendations relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. These are consistent with the statement Russia delivered at the General Assembly in December 2008, where it stated that "the Russian Federation is against discrimination, intolerance, repression and acts of violence with respect to persons with non-traditional sexual orientation."

As noted during the Working Group UPR discussions, and more fully detailed in Stakeholders' submissions, however, there have been numerous instances of restrictions on the exercise by lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people of such rights as freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Peaceful events to promote respect for those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender have been banned by the authorities, and those seeking to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly have been subject to arrest and violence.

According to nongovernmental monitors, the number of hate crimes in Russia has grown steadily by some 15 percent per year over the past five years, and concrete actions are urgently needed to combat this wave of violence. In furtherance of its UPR commitments, we urge the government to take measures to ensure that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by law, and that anti-LGBT bias is included in the legislation detailing aggravating factors for hate crimes. We further urge that those responsible for violence and hate crimes directed against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people be vigorously prosecuted and punished.

At the same time, there must be no restriction on the rights of those seeking to peacefully organise, associate, assemble and advocate around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, and we urge that such peaceful assemblies not be banned by the relevant authorities, and that adequate police protection be provided for those seeking to exercise such rights.

Finally, we urge the government, as recommended in the UPR report, to implement public education and awareness programmes, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and ensure that sensitivity training on these grounds be provided to law enforcement, judicial and other authorities.