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Item 6 – UPR Adoption - Egypt

Statement by:

COC Netherlands¹

Joined by

International Lesbian and Gay Association

20 March 2015

Mr. President

This statement has been prepared in consultation with a group of MENA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexuals, intersex and gender queers.

We are highly concerned about the continuous human rights violations to the LGBTIQ community in Egypt.

Egypt has no explicit law criminalizing homosexuality, but “debauchery”, prostitution and blasphemy laws are used against LGBTIQ people. Further, LGBTIQ issues are used as a political tool to undercut Islamist opposition by portraying the state as the guardian of public virtue, distracting public opinion from the real political and life issues Egyptians face.

The current regime – as with the Mubarrak regime – is cracking down on LGBTIQ people, and since October 2013 more than 200 documented men and trans-people have been arrested. Egypt is now one of the most active countries in discriminating against LGBTIQ. It feeds into the country’s already-hostile attitude to queer people, generating alarming levels of xenophobia, homo and trans-phobia.

The Egyptian Interior Ministry recently spelt out some types of online communications it will be searching for, showing their intention to eradicate homosexuality as if it was a disease or terrorism. This surveillance system openly violates rights to privacy, freedom of information and freedom of expression. As a result, dating sites for gay men are warning users to hide their identities following the arrests of scores of gay men.

LGBTIQ people are also tortured and sexually violated by police in detention. One of the 26 men arrested, tortured, and ultimately acquitted in the December 7 raid on a Cairo bathhouse tried to burn himself to death. The small act of this man was not just despair in the face of oppression, it was a statement of the continuity of resistance. He wasn’t weak, he was courageous.

Human rights can’t be compromised based on religious views or traditions. Order should be regained in Egypt through respect of every individual’s human rights. A new Egypt can’t be built on violations.

Thank you.

¹ This statement has been prepared in consultation with a group of MENA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexuals, intersex and gender queers (LGBTIQ): the **MantiQitna Network** | 42, Rue marché au charbon, 1000 Brussels | www.mantiqitna.org | +32471661280