

June 19, 2020

Response to the IDAHOBIT Statement Addressed to the United Nations and Partners in Support of the Rights of LGBTIQ+ People

In response to the Statement to Humanitarian and Development Agencies of the United Nations (UN) on the Occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) issued on May 17, 2020, the United Nations and our partners join your pledge of support for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ+) community in Lebanon.¹

In Lebanon, as well as in other parts of the world, the UN continues to work towards the protection of all persons, including sexual and gender minorities. As the crisis unfolds in Lebanon, we recognize that vulnerable groups, especially LGBTIQ+ persons, of all backgrounds and nationalities, are continuing to face human rights abuses and incredible challenges to access basic services, livelihoods, food, shelter, healthcare and protection from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Under the UN values of leaving no one behind and as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we will continue to ensure that our interventions and services are inclusive of all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

In Lebanon, the United Nations, along with our national and international development and humanitarian partners are responding to the needs of LGBTIQ+ persons, adults, youth, and children, in the following ways:

- Advocating for the protection of LGBTIQ+ individuals from violence, discrimination, and criminalization, including repealing national discriminatory laws which violate human rights.
- Supporting national institutions and civil society with assistance to ensure the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people and provide resources to LGBTIQ+ community-based protection and youth groups.
- Advocating for all LGBTIQ+ persons to be able to safely access public spaces.
- Increasing vulnerable LGBTIQ+ individuals' access to essential and life saving services, including cash assistance, shelter, healthcare, psychosocial support, including GBV services.
- Strengthening confidential complaint mechanisms to enable accountability for UN and partners.

¹ LGBTIQ+ people is a term to describe sexual and gender minorities (SGMs), those with diverse sexual preferences or differing expressions of gender. Other terms include People of Diverse Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Expression and Sexual Characteristics (SOGIESC), as referenced in the International Yogyakarta Principles.

- Creating enabling environments for diversity and inclusivity within UN agencies' and partners' workplaces, including protections for LGBTIQ+ staff members.
- Monitoring the heightened risks of LGBTIQ+ people during the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying socioeconomic impacts, including around eviction and homelessness, and economic exploitation and employment discrimination.

Further to these efforts, the United Nations and our partners commit to strengthening our support on the above, and expanding our assistance towards LGBTIQ+ people in the following ways:

- Integrating LGBTIQ+ rights within UN interventions across all sectors, including social protection, health, food security, livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene, basic assistance, security and justice; specifically -
 - Ensuring that cash assistance and social safety nets reach LGBTIQ+ people, without discrimination.
 - Create inclusive health care systems, which recognize and address the diverse needs of LGBTIQ+ persons, considering issues around mental health and psychosocial support related to sexuality and gender, particularly transgender persons.
 - Increase LGBTIQ+ people's access to safe and adequate housing, including the establishment of shelters to protect survivors of violence.
 - Promote the adoption of policies and services— at the national and local level — to help create socially inclusive, equitable and safe cities and public spaces free of violence and harassment against the LGBTIQ+ community, both internally to the UN and externally
 - Establish comprehensive sexuality education that enable marginalized communities to better educate young people to tackle stigma and discrimination within the coming generations.
- Generate public advocacy around issues of sexual and gender justice and celebrate LGBTIQ+ history month in June each year.
- Conduct regular consultations with LGBTIQ+ individuals and organizations on the needs, gaps, and challenges of LGBTIQ+ people to continue to inform inclusive gender-sensitive programming.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy on LGBTIQ+ issues, approved by the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team.

Under our obligation to support the fulfillment of human rights and meet the humanitarian needs of all people, we stand ready to assist the government and all stakeholders as we collectively work to guarantee the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTIQ+ people in Lebanon.



UNITED NATIONS
LEBANON



Addressed to: *(by embassies' alphabetical order)*

Ambassador Hubert Cooreman

Embassy of Belgium in Lebanon

Ambassador Emmanuelle Lamoureux

Embassy of Canada in Lebanon

Ambassador Merete Juhl

Embassy of Denmark in Lebanon

Ambassador Ralph Tarraf

Delegation of European Union in Lebanon

Ambassador Tarja Fernández

Embassy of Finland in Lebanon

Ambassador Bruno Foucher

Embassy of France in Lebanon

Ambassador Georg Birgelen

Embassy of Germany in Lebanon

Ambassador José Ignacio Madrazo

Embassy of Mexico in Lebanon

Ambassador Jan Waltmans

Embassy of Netherlands in Lebanon

Ambassador Leni Stenseth

Embassy of Norway in Lebanon

Ambassador José María Ferré de la Peña

Embassy of Spain in Lebanon

Ambassador Jörgen Lindström

Embassy of Sweden in Lebanon

Ambassador Chris Rampling

Deputy Head of Mission Alyson King

Embassy of United Kingdom in Lebanon

Country Director Ed Barnett

UK Department for International Development

Ambassador Ricardo Nario

Embassy of Uruguay in Lebanon