

[LGBT rights | First ever UN expert on sexual orientation & gender identity appointed](#)

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ISHR welcomes the appointment of Vitit Muntarbhorn as the UN's first ever independent expert looking into the situation of LGBT people around the world.

'For years, civil society had been calling on the Human Rights Council to address the systematic violence faced by people based on their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity,' said Pooja Patel, Programme Manager at ISHR. 'The discrimination faced by LGBT people is pervasive in all societies, and required systematic response at a global level. In this regard, the decision by the Council to create this expert position is timely and necessary,' she added.

ISHR had joined human rights groups from across the world to urge the Council to create an expert who can be a powerful advocate for LGBT rights, including through genuine and meaningful engagement with governments as well as civil society to develop tangible strategies to reduce and eliminate hateful acts. The Council has also asked the expert to address root causes as well as the multiple, intersecting and aggravated forms of ongoing violence and discrimination.

'Muntarbhorn is highly qualified for this groundbreaking position, and is no stranger to the Council. His previous role as Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea demonstrates a track record of understanding how difficult and contentious human rights issues and situations can be proactively and constructively addressed through intergovernmental spaces,' said Patel.

STATEMENT| ILGA welcomes Vitit Muntarbhorn's appointment as first-ever SOGI Independent Expert <https://t.co/2N83oOfJKf> #HRC33 #SOGIexpertNOW

— ILGA (@ILGAWORLD) [September 30, 2016](#)

Furthermore, Muntarbhorn was the Co-Chair of the 2006 Yogyakarta Principles on the application of international human rights law based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Upon this appointment, Russia and Saudi Arabia (speaking on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, except Albania) made public statements expressing their rejection of this expert post and declared they would not engage or cooperate with this mandate.

'Member States of the Council, and any other States seeking membership, are expected to engage in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue with the Council and its subsidiary bodies, including the Special Procedures,' said Patel.

'States seeking to boycott this mandate based on cultural relativist ideology do so to their own disadvantage. For any country to fully enjoy development, all human rights must be enjoyed by all,' she added.

The initiative to establish the important mandate was led by a group of States comprising Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay.

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