

## [LGBT rights | Inter-American Commission warns of indefinite halt to work of UN Independent Expert as crucial vote looms](#)

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**States should combat discrimination against LGBT persons and resist any efforts at the UN to weaken protections in that regard, says the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.**



With a crucial vote expected at the UN General Assembly on Monday, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued a [statement](#) on Saturday calling on States of the region to reject a looming attempt to halt the work of the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

‘States that raise the flag of human rights and advocate real and effective equality for all people without discrimination ... should continue to show leadership and support the continuity of the mandate of the work of the Independent Expert,’ said the IACHR Rapporteur for the Rights of LGBTI people.

Through an [amendment](#) to be considered by the Plenary of the General Assembly on Monday, the African Group seeks to reintroduce a paragraph to a resolution on the Human Rights Council, rejected by the Third Committee of the General Assembly in November. This paragraph seeks to defer consideration of the mandate of the Independent Expert - essentially halting his work. Unlike the paragraph considered during the Third Committee, the one to be considered on Monday doesn’t specify a time for the deferral to be completed or reviewed.

‘As the amendment stands, the Independent Expert’s work could be halted indefinitely,’ said ISHR’s Eleanor Openshaw. ‘This is a grave threat to efforts to promote non-discrimination. Procedurally it is also deeply suspect.’

Check out & share our backgrounder video about today's vote at the UN General Assembly re [#SOGI](#) expert <https://t.co/i5YjDLca8Q>

— ISHR (@ISHRglobal) [December 19, 2016](#)

As the IACHR notes in its statement, ‘Such an amendment would jeopardise the mandate of the Independent Expert and weaken international protection in favor of persons with diverse sexual orientations, identities and gender expressions, real or perceived, or non-normative, or whose bodies vary from female and male body standards.’

‘The Commission’s statement is very welcome. We understand that pressure on several States from organisations associated with the Catholic Church and so-called ‘family values’ have been fierce,’ said Ms

Openshaw. 'It is essential these States hear voices supportive of the mandate of the Expert, loud and clear'.

The IACHR's statement comes after [870 civil society groups](#) from across the globe called on States to stand up for the principle of non-discrimination and support the mandate of the Independent Expert.

Other human rights mechanisms have also expressed concern. The UN Coordination Committee on Special Procedures – Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts – also issued a [statement](#) noting 'deep concern' about the African Group initiative to block the Expert.

The leadership of a group of Latin American States has been crucial in the creation of the mandate at the Human Rights Council, and the defence of the mandate at the Third Committee in November. The group of States – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay – also issued a [letter to all governments](#) around the world pressing the point that the Independent Expert position is based on 'a universal issue that should bring together all Member States of the United Nations: the fight against violence and discrimination'.

IACHR