

Remarks addressing the United Nations Human Rights Commission on the Occasion of the 1st Periodic Review of the State of Turkey compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Şevval Kilic, Istanbul LGBTTT

18 October 2012

Dear Madam Chairperson,

Thank you for allowing us to address the LGBT situation in Turkey. My name is Şevval Kilic and I am a trans activist. Today I am representing my group, Istanbul LGBTTT, and 4 other LGBT organizations in Turkey, who jointly submitted a shadow report to the Human Rights Committee on LGBT situation in my country. Despite widespread and systematic violations of LGBT rights in Turkey, our government has chosen to turn a blind eye on the ongoing legal injustices against members of our community. Such a lack of care can be easily recognized in the answers of the

Turkish Government to your list of questions regarding lgbt status.

As a trans woman who has suffered from years of discrimination and abuse, I am sad to report that my country has the second highest rate of hate-motivated murders of the trans individuals worldwide. The Trans community also faces social discrimination, police abuse, and denial of access to work and education. The state has adopted a series of anti-LGBT policies, such as their refusal to include protection based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the new constitution. The government's practices are equally hostile and unconstructive, practices such as harassing trans individuals through the discriminatory enforcement of the law of misdemeanor and brutal treatment of LGBT activists. On the one hand government confiscates publications for making references to homosexuality, and on the other hand the state officials promote homophobia and misunderstanding about LGBT people with impunity. In my society the transgender victims of violence are afraid of going to the police to report cases of violence, while the perpetrators of anti-LGBT murders can use a senseless article of the law, "Unjust Provocation", to receive reduce sentences.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Turkish LGBT community is not asking for exceptional privileges or special rights. All we are asking for is for the government of Turkey to respect its international obligations under international treaties, including ICCPR, and provide LGBT individuals with the same level of rights and protections that all human beings are entitled to. We hope by the end of this process, and based on your concluding observations, the Turkish government first to acknowledge the situation of lgbt rights, and subsequently take appropriate actions to address these violations. On behalf of LGBT coalition, we are ready to cooperate with the government of Turkey and international community towards the creation of a better and more democratic country for everyone.

Thank you