

Oral statement to the 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 6: Interactive Dialogue for the adoption of Guatemala's Universal Periodic Review report

Speaker: Stacy Velasquez

Italic: not read out in oral statement, only written version

Your Excellencies,

My name is Stacy Velásquez, I am a trans woman member of the UPR Coalition (Coalición EPU).

In recent years, laws and public policies that restrict women's rights, particularly sexual and reproductive rights, have been promoted and reformed in Guatemala. As of 2017, violence against women continues to be the most reported crime at the national level, but remains the most unpunished. Sexual violence against girls and adolescents is on the rise, leaving thousands of girls with forced pregnancies and childbearing. The Law against Femicide and other forms of violence against women is an important step forward; however, as long as structural changes and actions for prevention, care and punishment are not prioritised, this violence will not cease.

Since 2012, Guatemala committed itself to building an LGBTIQ+ public policy. But, to date, the commitments made have completely deteriorated. This includes initiatives *such as Law 5272 that criminalises the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights, and denies sexual diversity, in the name of selectively protecting some lives and some families. On 16 December 2022, the Constitutional Court denied trans people the right to legal identity; despite the murder of more than 90 trans women since 2017, the State has not paid attention, denying certain populations the right to a life free from violence.*

While we welcome the State's acceptance of four [recommendations](#) to adopt measures to combat discrimination and violence against women, girls, adolescents and LGBTI people, through national protection policies and programmes, and an urgent protocol for law enforcement, we are concerned that the State has [rejected](#) recommendations on the prohibition of conversion therapies and the recognition of the gender identity of transgender people.

These echo [similar recommendations made by UN treaty bodies](#) such as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee against Torture, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We recall that these bodies emanate from legally binding treaties ratified by the State of Guatemala.

We urgently call on the State of Guatemala to cooperate constructively with the international community, UN experts and civil society organisations in the implementation of these recommendations.

Despite efforts in Congress and in the Constitutional Court, the government still has a democratic debt with trans women. Without recognition of our gender identity, we transgender people do not have democracy.

Thank you,