

Gay Libyan slams his country's UN hate rant

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Libyan activist responds to UN envoy's claims that gays are a threat to humanity.

A leading gay activist in Libya has responded to his country's delegate who told a planning meeting of the UN Human Rights Council that gays threatened the continuation of the human race.

As Gay Star News reported yesterday, the Libyan representative on the UN council was protesting against its first panel discussion on discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, scheduled for 7 March.

Libya's representative told the gathering of ambassadors that LGBT topics 'affect religion and the continuation and reproduction of the human race.;

Speaking with Gay Star News, Waleed, a gay activist and journalist from Tripoli, Libya responded: 'These hateful words of the delegate both shocked and surprised me.

'Human rights are universal and include LGBT rights. Therefore how can a human right be a threat to humanity? Being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is not a disease, nor a threat. We have always been part of Libyan, Arab, Islam and human nature. For example, Abu Nawas was a great gay Muslim poet whose contribution to our culture and heritage was immense, rather than a threat!

'LGBT Libyans are everywhere even though many of us are scared to identify as such because of constant threats based on backwards hostility and homophobic attitudes expressed by people such as the delegate.'

Waleed pointed out that the World Health Organisation does not consider homosexuality as an illness and that countless studies from biology to sociology, from history to anthropology show that LGBT people are part and parcel of the natural human condition.

He said: 'It is time to stop hate and denial. If the delegate is true to the revolution he should be calling for equality not oppression, which was the hallmark of the Gadaffi regime.

The spark of revolution came from the youth movement with whom I was involved; we want a modern Libyan democracy which respects the rights and freedom of every Libyan. I cannot believe this person is standing against all that we have fought for in the revolution or speaking for Libya.'

Waleed said Libya would only prove it was serious about human rights if it repealed articles 407 and 408 of the Penal Code of 1953 that criminalise same-sex acts and contradict the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Libya is a signatory.

In November, when the UN General Assembly reinstated Libya on the human rights council, deputy UN envoy Ibrahim Dabbashi said 'the new Libya deserves to return to the Human Rights Council to contribute with other members to the promotion of values of human rights.

'No violations of human rights will take place on Libyan territory in the future and if it happens the perpetrator will never get away with it,' he vowed.

Waleed said: 'The delegate is surely in total contradiction to Dabbashi, his statement is not a merely attack on homosexuality, but on the very basis of human rights - what it means to be human.'

The Human Rights Council contains many member states where LGBT human rights are poorly protected or non-existent, including Nigeria, Pakistan and Uganda.

P.S.

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<http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/np5UFcY1Dw>