

Statement on the UN Committee Against Torture's Claim that Responsible Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCEs) make use of Electro Shock Treatments

In a "Constructive Dialogue" session between a high level US delegation and the Committee Against Torture (CAT) yesterday (12/11/14) at 10.00 – 12.00, the delegation was asked questions posed by three committee members relating to 'conversion therapy'. One committee member wrongly associated conversion therapy, sometimes referred pejoratively as 'reparative' therapy, with the use of 'electro-shock' techniques, once used but long abandoned by professional mental health professionals. No actual example of the use of this technique in respect of sexual orientation change efforts (SOCEs) in the USA was cited by the complainant Mr Samuel Brinton who is sponsored by the National Centre for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), in California. It is his complaint that forms the context of these questions. What is unknown is whether the committee has ascertained the date, place and identity of the provider of conversion therapy Mr Brinton claims damaged him, and whether or not his father, who he claims abused him, has been prosecuted. The [distinguished delegation](#)¹ from the USA will respond to a range of issues brought to their attention by the committee, including the question of therapy for unwanted homosexual feelings, at a second public session (Replies of the USA) on Thursday 13th November 2014, at 3.00 pm. That session will be available on the [UN webcast facility](#)² along with the first session (Wednesday 12th February) in which questions relating to USA's compliance in 'treaty violations' are to be raised in respect of the continuation of conversion therapy.

Speaking from Geneva shortly after the public Constructive Dialogue session took place, Dr Mike Davidson, Director of Core Issues Trust, an NGO, commented:

"NGO's through whom the NCLR have presented their case to this (53rd) Session of CAT, typically present their grievances in closed, private and restricted meetings to committee members, following which there is a public response by a delegation of the state in question. In this case, it is odd that the NCLR hearing appears to have taken place in the presence of the committee's Vice Chairperson, Ms Felice Gaer – an American citizen, and active proponent of gay and lesbian activism. Is this standard practice within the UN, where an alleged treaty violation is heard by one of its own citizens?" he asked. This indicates that the CAT body is essentially involved with jurisprudence only, and is not the legislative authority that the NCLR's "#BornPerfect" campaign appears to claim."

Following the meeting, on the suggestion of the Rapporteur Mr Satyabhoosun Gupt Domah, Dr Davidson offered three important documents^{3 4 5}, one endorsed by the Vice President of the American College of Pediatricians Dr Michelle Cretella, to Vice Chairperson Gaer and to the committee's medical representative from Denmark, Mr Jens Modvig. Reflecting further, Dr Davidson said:

"Clearly whatever the committee's response to the delegation's reply on the 13th of November in the weeks that follow, and however the committee ultimately reports on the matter, their findings are not legally binding on the state. I think the CAT body may well exceed its mandate if it conveys the impression that committee recommendations on the matter of so called 'conversion therapy' are to be read as UN law, thereby sanctioning the persecution of therapists practicing SOCE ethically. To convey this idea will lead to the further identification, and expulsion from professional and licensing bodies, -based on ideological and spurious ethical charges,- of innocent professional therapists and counsellors. It is vital that the public in whichever country they reside, understand this, and that they are vigilant as to the dangers of hate speech that might be extended towards these professionals, as a result of any poorly investigated demand by LGBT activists at a politicised committee which has no legislative authority".

Dr Mike Davidson, Director Core Issues Trust

13 November, 2014

¹ [List of High Level Delegates to UN Committee Against Torture \(CAT\).](#)

² <http://www.treatybodywebcast.org/treaty-body-webcast-ii/>

³ [Protecting the Rights to Receive and Provide Professional Care for Unwanted SSA](#), to OSCE (HDIM 2014)

⁴ [What the Research Does and Does Not Say: Is Therapeutic Support for Unwanted Same-Sex Attractions Harmful?](#)

⁵ [Core Issues Trust Comment on NCLR submission to 53d CAT Convention, 4 November 2014](#)