

Human Rights Council - 43rd Session
Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review - Kazakhstan

Thank you, President

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sana Sezim and the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome the adoption by Kazakhstan of recommendations calling for a zero-tolerance policy on acts of torture and violence, with particular emphasis on protecting the rights of women and children. We also welcome the state's commitment to putting in place policies and programs aimed at entrenching women's right to equality and the prevention of domestic violence against women and children -- which remains an acute problem in Kazakhstan. We are also encouraged by Kazakhstan's acceptance of a recommendation on the incorporation of comprehensive sexuality education in schools and out-of school settings.

However, we are concerned by Kazakhstan's continued refusal to accept recommendations calling on the state to take action in eliminating discrimination and violence on the grounds on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. The state's justification that existing and draft legislation on sex based discrimination will be sufficient in addressing the range of violations experienced by persons on the grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, is not only inaccurate but also serves to fuel and exacerbate stigma and discrimination against anyone falling outside this rigid two-sex system and compulsory heterosexuality.

We urge the government to ensure sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion, are available to all women and young persons over the age of 16, without requiring parental consent or any other kind of third party authorisation. Modern contraceptives must be covered by the national health insurance system and included in the list of essential medicines, as part of the government health program by 2020.

Thank you